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*J. KING,*
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# A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS AND ILLUSTRATION OF SOME OF SHAKESPEARE's REMARKABLE CHARACTERS.

By Wm. RICHARDSON, Esq.
Professor of Humanity in the University of GLASGOW.

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INSCRIBED

MOST RESPECTFULLY

TO

ROBERT BUNTINE, Esq.

OF ARDOCH,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE ESTEEM

AND GRATITUDE OF

HIS MOST OBEDIENT, AND

MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

*Glasgow College,*
*March 7, 1774.*

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# INTRODUCTION.

MORALISTS of all ages have recommended Poetry as an art no leſs inſtructive than amuſing; tending at once to improve the heart, and entertain the fancy. The genuine and original Poet, peculiarly favoured by nature, and intimately acquainted with the conſtitution of the human mind, not by a long train of metaphyſical deductions, but, as it were, by immediate intuition, diſplays the workings of every affection, detects the origin of every paſſion, traceth its progreſs, and delineates its character. Thus, he teaches us to know ourſelves, inſpires us with magnanimous ſentiments, animates our love of virtue, and confirms our hatred of vice. Moved by his ſtriking pictures of the inſtability of human enjoyments, we

A moderate

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moderate the vehemence of our deſires, fortify our minds, and are enabled to ſuſtain adverſity.

Among the antient Greeks, the ſtudy of the Poets conſtituted an eſſential part in their celebrated ſyſtems of education. Plutarch obſerves, in his treatiſe on this curious and intereſting ſubject, that, as mandrakes planted among vines, imparting their virtue to the grape, correct its acidity, and improve its flavour; ſo the poetic art, adorning the precepts of philoſophy, renders them eaſy and agreeable. Socrates, according to Xenophon, was aſſiduous in applying the works of Homer and Heſiod to the valuable purpoſes of moral inſtruction. Diſcourſing on the character of Therſites, he diſplayed the meanneſs of calumny, and the folly of preſumption; he argued, that modeſty was the companion of merit, and that effrontery was the proper object of ridicule and reproach.



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proach. Diſcourſing on the ſtory of Circe, he illuſtrated the fatal effects of intemperance; and rehearſing the fable of the Syrens, he warned his diſciples againſt the allurements of falſe delight. This great teacher of virtue was ſo fully convinced of the advantages reſulting from the connection of poetry with philoſophy, that he aſſiſted Euripides in compoſing his tragedies, and furniſhed him with many excellent ſentiments and obſervations. The propriety of beſtowing attention on the ſtudy of human nature, and of borrowing aſſiſtance from the poets, and eſpecially from Shakeſpeare, will be more particularly illuſtrated in the following remarks.

The ſtudy of human nature has been often and variouſly recommended. "Know thyſelf," was a precept ſo highly eſteemed by the venerable ſages of antiquity, that they aſcribed it to the Delphian oracle *.



* Cic. de legibus.

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By reducing it to practice, we learn the dignity of human nature: Our emulation is excited by contemplating our divine original: And, by discovering the capacity and extent of our faculties, we become desirous of higher improvement. Nor would the practice of this apophthegm enable us merely to elevate and enlarge our desires, but also, to purify and refine them; to withstand the sollicitations of groveling appetites, and subdue their violence: For improvement in virtue consists in duly regulating our inferior appetites, no less than in cultivating the principles of benevolence and magnanimity. Numerous, however, are the desires, and various are the passions that agitate the human heart. Every individual is actuated by feelings peculiar to himself, insensible even of their existence; of their precise force and tendency often ignorant. But, to prevent the inroads of vice, and preserve our

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our minds free from the tyranny of lawleſs paſſions, vigilance muſt be exerted where we are weakeſt and moſt expoſed. We muſt therefore be attentive to the ſtate and conſtitution of our own minds; we muſt diſcover to what habits we are moſt addicted, and of what propenſities we ought chiefly to beware: We muſt deliberate with ourſelves on what reſources we can moſt aſſuredly depend, and what motives are beſt calculated to repel the invader. Now, the ſtudy of human nature, accuſtoming us to turn our attention inwards, and reflect on the various propenſities and inclinations of the heart, facilitates ſelf-examination, and renders it habitual.

Independent of utility, the ſtudy of the human mind is recommended in a peculiar manner to the curious and inquiſitive; and is capable of yielding delight by the novelty, beauty, and magnificence, of the



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object. Many find amusement in searching into the constitution of the material world; and, with unwearied diligence, pursue the progress of nature in the growth of a plant, or the formation of an insect. They spare neither labour nor expence, to fill their cabinets with every curious production; They travel from climate to climate: They submit with chearfulness to fatigue, and inclement seasons; and think their industry sufficiently compensated, by the discovery of some unusual phaenomenon. Not a pebble that lies on the shore, not a leaf that waves in the forest, but attracts their notice, and stimulates their inquiry. Events, or incidents, that the vulgar regard with terror or indifference, afford them supreme delight: They rejoice at the return of a comet, and celebrate the blooming of an aloe, more than the birth of an emperor. Nothing is left unexplored: Air, ocean,

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ocean, the minuteſt objects of ſenſe, as well as the greateſt and moſt remote, are accurately and attentively ſcrutinized. But, though theſe reſearches are laudable, and are ſuited to the dignity and capacity of the human mind, we ought to remember, that Mind itſelf deſerves our attention. Endowed with the ſuperior powers of feeling and underſtanding, capable of thought and reflection, active, conſcious, ſuſceptible of delight, and provident of futurity, it claims to itſelf a duration, when the moſt ſplendid objects around us ſhall be deſtroyed. Obſerve the vigilance of the ſenſes in collecting ideas from every part of the creation: Memory preſerves them as the materials of thought, and the principles of knowledge: Our reaſoning faculty ſeparates, combines, or compares them, in order to diſcover their relations and conſequences: And imagination, ſedulous to amuſe, arranges them into va-



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rious groups and aſſemblages. If we conſider the paſſions and feelings of the heart; if we reflect on their diverſity, and contemplate the various aſpects they aſſume, the violence of ſome will terrify and aſtoniſh, the fantaſtic extravagance of many will excite amazement; and others, ſoft and complacent, will ſooth us, and yield delight. Shall we aſſert, therefore, that the ſtudy of human nature is barren or unpleaſant? Or that mind, thus actuated and informed, is leſs worthy of our notice than the inſect produced at noon-tide, to finiſh its exiſtence with the ſetting ſun? "Shall a man," ſays Socrates, "be ſkilled in the geography of foreign countries, and continue ignorant of the ſoil and limits of his own? Shall he inquire into the qualities of external objects, and pay no attention to the mind?"

But, though the utility or pleaſure reſulting from the ſtudy of human nature

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are manifeſt, the progreſs men have hitherto made in it neither correſponds with the dignity of the ſubject, nor with our advances in other branches of ſcience. Neither is our knowledge of the paſſions and faculties of the mind proportioned to the numerous theories men have fabricated concerning them. On the contrary, the numerous theories of human nature that have appeared in various ages and languages, have been ſo different from one another, and withal ſo plauſible and impoſing, that, inſtead of informing, they perplex. From this uncertainty and diverſity of opinion, ſome have aſſerted, that the mind of man, on account of its tranſcendent excellence, and the inconceivable delicacy of its ſtructure, can never be the object of preciſe inquiry. Others, again, from very different premiſes, deduce the ſame concluſion, forming their opinions on the numerous, and apparently diſcordant,

powers

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powers and affections of the mind, and affirming, that its operations are governed by no regular principles.

That a perfect knowledge of the nature and faculties of the mind is not to be acquired in our present condition, cannot possibly be denied. Neither can the contrary be affirmed of any subject of philosophical inquiry. Yet our internal feelings, our observation and experience, supply us with rich materials, sufficient to animate our love of knowledge; and, by enabling us to prosecute our researches, to extend the limits of human understanding. Neither can we affirm, that our thoughts, feelings, and affections, are in a state of anarchy and confusion. Nothing, you say, seems wilder and more incoherent, than the images and ideas continually fluctuating in the mind: Like the "gay motes that people the sun-beams," they know no order, and are

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are guided by no connection. We are conſcious of no power that regulates their motions, reſtrains their impetuoſity, or compoſeth their diſorder. No leſs irregular and diſagreeing are the feelings and emotions of the heart. We are alike acceſſible to love or hatred, confidence or ſuſpicion, exultation or deſpondency. Theſe paſſions and diſpoſitions are often blended together, or ſucceed each other, with a velocity which we can neither meaſure nor conceive. The ſoul that now melts with tenderneſs, is inſtantly frantic with rage. The countenance now adorned with complacency, and beauteous with the ſmile of content, is in a moment clouded with anxiety, or diſtorted with envy. He muſt therefore be more than mortal who can reduce this tumultuous and diſorderly chaos to regularity.—"Lift up thine eyes to the firmament," ſaid a countryman to a philoſopher, "number

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"number the ſtars, compute their diſtances, and explain their motions. Obſerve the diverſity of ſeaſons, and the confuſion occaſioned by the changeableneſs of the weather: The ſun and refreſhing ſhowers cheriſh the fruits of the earth; but our fields are often blighted with mildews, the ſky is ſuddenly overcaſt, the ſtorms deſcend, and the hopes of the year are blaſted. Preſcribe laws to the winds, and govern the rage of the tempeſts; then will I believe, that the courſe of nature is regular and determined." Thus, even external phaenomena, to an uninſtructed perſon, will ſeem as wild and incongruous as the motions and affections of the mind. On a more accurate inſpection, he finds that harmony and deſign pervade the univerſe; that the motions of the ſtars are regular; and that laws are preſcribed to the tempeſt. Nature extends her attention to the moſt inſignificant productions: The prin-

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principles of vegetation are eſtabliſhed immutable in the texture of the meaneſt bloſſom; the laws of its exiſtence are accurately defined; and the period of its duration invariably determined. If theſe obſervations are juſt, and if we ſtill maintain that the mind is in a ſtate of anarchy and diſorder, we are reduced to the neceſſity of affirming, that nature hath exhauſted her powers in the formation of inferior objects, and neglected the moſt important; that ſhe hath eſtabliſhed laws and government in the inanimate creation, and abandoned the mind to miſrule; and that ſhe hath given us a body ſuited to our condition, faſhioned according to the moſt accurate proportions, and adjuſted to the niceſt rules of mechanics; and left the animating principle, the mover and director of this wonderful machine, to be actuated by random impulſes, miſhapen, and imperfect. Shall we acquieſce in this opinion,

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nion, and aſcribe negligence or inability to the Creator? The laws that regulate the intellectual ſyſtem are too fine for ſuperficial attention, and elude the perception of the vulgar. But every accurate and ſedate obſerver is ſenſible of their exiſtence.

Difficulty in making juſt experiments is the principal reaſon why the knowledge of human nature has been retarded. The materials of this ſtudy are commonly gathered from reflection on our own feelings, or from obſervations on the conduct of others. Each of theſe methods is expoſed to difficulty, and conſequently to error.

Natural philoſophers poſſeſs great advantages over moraliſts and metaphyſicians, in ſo far as the ſubjects of their inquiries belong to the ſenſes, are external, material, and often permanent. Hence they can retain them in their preſence till they have examined their motion, parts, or

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or compoſition: They can have recourſe to them for a renewal of their ideas when they grow languid or obſcure, or when they feel their minds vigorous, and diſpoſed to philoſophize. But paſſions are excited independent of our volition, and ariſe or ſubſide without our deſire or concurrence. Compaſſion is never awakened but by the view of pain or of ſorrow. Reſentment is never kindled but by actual ſuffering, or by the view of injuſtice. Will anger, jealouſy, and revenge, attend the ſummons of the diſpaſſionate ſage, that he may examine their conduct, and diſmiſs them? Will pride and ambition obey the voice of the humble hermit, and aſſiſt him in explaining the principles of human nature? Or by what powerful ſpell can the abſtracted philoſopher, whoſe paſſions are all chaſtened and ſubdued, whoſe heart never throbs with deſire, prevail on the amorous affections to viſit

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viſit the ungenial clime of his breaſt, and ſubmit their features to the rigour of his unrelenting ſcrutiny? The philoſopher, accuſtomed to moderate his paſſions, rather than indulge them, is of all men leaſt able to provoke their violence; and, in order to ſucceed in his reſearches, he muſt recal the idea of feelings perceived at ſome former period; or he muſt ſeize their impreſſion, and mark their operations at the very moment they are accidentally excited. Thus, with other obvious diſadvantages, he will often loſe the opportunity of a happy mood, unable to avail himſelf of thoſe animating returns of vivacity and attention eſſential to genius, but independent of the will.

Obſervations made, while the mind is inflamed, are difficult in the execution, incomplete, and erroneous. Eager paſſions admit no partners, and endure no rivals in their authority. The moment reflection,

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reflection, or any foreign or oppoſing principle, begins to operate, they are either exceedingly exaſperated, agitating the mind, and leaving it no leiſure for ſpeculation; or, if they are unable to maintain their aſcendant, they become cool and indiſtinct; their aſpect grows dim; and obſervations made during their decline are imperfect. The paſſions are ſwift and evaneſcent: We cannot arreſt their celerity, nor ſuſpend them in the mind during pleaſure. You are moved by ſtrong affection: Seize the opportunity, let none of its motions eſcape you, and obſerve every ſentiment it excites. You cannot. While the paſſion prevails, you have no leiſure for ſpeculation; and be aſſured it hath ſuffered abatement, if you have time to philoſophize.

But you proceed by recollection. Still, however, your obſervations are limited, and your theory partial. To be acquainted



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with the nature of any paſſion, we muſt know by what combination of feelings it is excited; to what temperament it is allied; in what proportion it gathers force and ſwiftneſs; what propenſities, and what aſſociations of ideas either retard or accelerate its impetuoſity; and how it may be oppoſed, weakened, or ſuppreſſed. But, if theſe circumſtances eſcape the moſt vigilant and abſtracted attention, when the mind is actually agitated, how can they be recollected when the paſſion is entirely quieted? Moreover, every paſſion is compounded of inferior and ſubordinate feelings, eſſential to its exiſtence, in their own nature nicely and minutely varied, but whoſe different ſhades and gradations are difficult to be diſcerned. To theſe we muſt be acutely attentive; to mark how they are combined, blended, or oppoſed; how they are ſuddenly extinguiſhed, in a moment renewed, and again extinguiſhed.

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tinguiſhed. But theſe fleet volatile feelings, perceived only when the mind is affected, elude the moſt dexterous and active memory. Add to this, that an idea of memory is ever fainter and leſs diſtinct than an actual perception, eſpecially if the idea to be renewed is of a ſpiritual nature, a thought, ſentiment, or internal ſenſation.

Even allowing the poſſibility of accurate obſervation, our theories will continue partial and inadequate *. We have only one view of the ſubject, and know not what aſpects it may aſſume, or what powers it may poſſeſs in the conſtitution of another. No principle hath been more variouſly treated, nor hath given riſe to a greater number of ſyſtems, than that by which we are denominated moral agents, and determine the merit or demerit



* Dr. Reid's Inquiry, chap. I. ſect. 2.

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rit of human actions. But this can proceed from no other cauſe than the diverſity of our feelings, and the neceſſity we are under of meaſuring the diſpoſitions of others by our own. Even this moral principle, though a competent judge of the virtue and propriety of human actions, is apt to miſlead us in our inquiries concerning the ſtructure and diſpoſitions of the mind. Deſirous of avoiding the rebuke of this ſevere and vigilant cenſor, we are ready to extenuate every blamable quality, and magnify what we approve.

In order, therefore, to rectify our opinions, and enlarge our conceptions of the human mind, we muſt ſtudy its operations in the conduct and deportment of others; We muſt mingle in ſociety, and obſerve the manners and characters of mankind, according as caſual or unexpected incidents may furniſh an opportunity. But the mind, not being an object of the external

ſenſes,

ſenſes; the temper and inclinations of others can only be known to us by ſigns either natural or artificial, referring us to our own internal ſenſations. Thus, we are expoſed nearly to the ſame difficulties as before: We cannot at pleaſure call forth the objects of our reſearches, nor retain them till we have examined their nature: We can know no more of the internal feelings of another than he expreſſes by outward ſigns or language; and conſequently he may feel many emotions that we are unable eaſily to conceive. Neither can we conſider human characters and affections as altogether indifferent to us: They are not mere objects of curioſity; they excite love or hatred, approbation or diſlike. But, when the mind is influenced by theſe affections, and by others that often attend them, the judgment is apt to be biaſſed, and the force of the principle we contemplate is increaſed or

diminiſhed accordingly. The inquirer muſt not only beware of external difficulties, but muſt preſerve his heart both from angry, and from kind affection. The maxim, that all men who deliberate about doubtful matters, ſhould diveſt themſelves of hatred, friendſhip, anger, and compaſſion, is as applicable in philoſophy as in politics.

Since experiments, made by reflecting on our own minds, or by attending to the conduct of others, are liable to difficulty, and conſequently to error; we ſhould embrace every aſſiſtance that may facilitate and improve them. Were it poſſible, during the continuance of a violent paſſion, to ſeize a faithful impreſſion of its features, and an exact delineation of the images it creates in us, ſuch a valuable copy would guide the philoſopher in tracing the perplexed and intricate mazes of metaphyſical inquiry. By frequently examining it,

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it, every partial conſideration, and every feeling tending to miſlead his opinions, would be corrected: His conception would be enlarged by diſcovering paſſions more or leſs vehement than his own, or by diſcovering tempers of a different colour. We judge of mankind by referring their actions to the paſſions and principles that influence our own behaviour: We have no other guide, ſince the nature of the paſſions and faculties of the mind are not diſcernible by the ſenſes. It may, however, be objected, that, according to this hypotheſis, thoſe who deduce the conduct of others from malignant paſſions, and thoſe who are capable of imitating them, muſt themſelves be malignant. The obſervation is inaccurate. Every man, unleſs his conſtitution be defective, inherits the principles of every paſſion: But no man is the prey of all the paſſions. Some of them are ſo feeble in themſelves, or ra-



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ther, ſo entirely ſuppreſſed by the aſcendant of others, that they never become principles of action, nor conſtitute any part of the character. Hence it is the buſineſs of culture and education, by giving exerciſe to virtuous principles, and by rendering them habitual, to bear down their opponents, and ſo gradually to weaken and wear them out. If we meaſure the minds of others precifely by our own, as we have formed and faſhioned them by habit and education, and make no account of feeble and decaying principles, our theories muſt neceſſarily be inadequate: But, by conſidering the copy and portrait of minds different from our own, and by reflecting on theſe latent and unexerted principles, augmented and promoted by imagination, we may diſcover many new tints, and uncommon features. Now, that claſs of poetical writers that excel by imitating the paſſions, might

contribute

contribute in this reſpect to rectify and enlarge the ſentiments of the philoſopher: And, if ſo, they would have the additional merit of conducting us to the temple of truth, by an eaſier and more agreeable path than that of mere metaphyſics.

We often confound the writer who imitates the paſſions with him who only deſcribes them. Shakeſpeare imitates, Corneille deſcribes. Poets of the ſecond claſs, no leſs than thoſe of the firſt, may invent the moſt elegant fictions, may paint the moſt beautiful imagery, may exhibit ſituations exceedingly intereſting, and conduct their incidents with propriety: Their verſification may be harmonious; and, above all, their characters may be judiciouſly compoſed, partaking of no incongruous qualities, and free from the diſcord of jarring principles. But the end of dramatic poetry not only requires that the characters be judiciouſly moulded and aptly

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circumſtanced, but that every paſſion be naturally expreſſed. There is certainly a wide difference between the deſcription of the ſallies, the repulſes, and impatience of a violent affection, whether they are deſcribed by the agent or the ſpectator, and their actual imitation and expreſſion. But perfect imitation can never be effectuated, unleſs the poet in ſome meaſure becomes the perſon he repreſents, clothes himſelf with his character, aſſumes his manners, and tranſpoſeth himſelf into his ſituation: The texture of his mind muſt be exquiſitely fine and delicate; ſuſceptible of every feeling, and eaſily moved by every impreſſion. Together with this delicacy of affection, he muſt poſſeſs a peculiar warmth and facility of imagination, by which he may retire from himſelf, become inſenſible of his actual condition, and regardleſs of external circumſtances, feel the very incidents he invents: Like the

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the votaries of a pagan religion, he muſt worſhip idols, the works of his own hands, and tremble before the daemons of his own creation. Nothing affords a ſtronger evidence of the active, verſatile nature of the ſoul, and of the amazing rapidity of its motions, than theſe ſeemingly inconceivable and inconſiſtent exertions.

Shakeſpeare, inventing the characters of Hamlet, Macbeth, or Othello, actually felt the paſſions, and contending emotions aſcribed to them. Compare a ſoliloquy of Hamlet, with one of the deſcriptions of Roderigue in the Cid. Nothing can be more natural in the circumſtances and with the temper of Hamlet, than the following reflections.

O, that this too too ſolid fleſh would melt,
Thaw, and reſolve itſelf into a dew!
Or that the Everlaſting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainſt ſelf-ſlaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, ſtale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uſes of this world!

Fie

Fie on't! O fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature
Possess it merely.—That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much; not two!
So excellent a king, that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr: So loving to my mother,
That he might not let e'en the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly.—Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!
A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears.—Why she, even she—
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month—
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes—
She married.—Oh, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

In the Cid, Rodirigue, who is the hero of the tragedy, and deeply enamoured of Chimene,

Chimene, is called upon to revenge a heinous inſult done to his father by the father of his miſtreſs; and he delineates the diſtreſs of his ſituation, in the following manner; certainly with great beauty of expreſſion and verſification, and with peculiar elegance of deſcription, but not as a real ſufferer.

Percé juſqu' au fond du coeur
D'une atteinte imprevue auſſi bien que mortelle;
Miſerable vengeur d'une trop juſte querelle,
Et malheureux objet d'une injuſte rigueur,
Je demeure immobile, et mon ame abattue
Cede au coup qui me tue.

This harangue would better ſuit a deſcriptive noveliſt or narrator of the ſtory, than the perſon actually concerned. Let us make the experiment. Let us change the verbs and pronouns from the firſt perſon into the third; and, inſtead of ſuppoſing that Rodirigue ſpeaks, let us imagine that the ſtate of his mind is deſcribed by a ſpec-



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a ſpectator: "Pierced, even to the heart, "by an unforeſeen, as well as mortal "ſtroke, the miſerable avenger of a juſt "quarrel, and the unhappy object of un-"juſt ſeverity, *he remains* motionleſs, "and *his* broken ſpirit *yields* to the blow "that deſtroys him."

*Il* demeure immobile, et *ſon* ame abattue
Cede au coup qui *le* tue.

Try the ſoliloquy of Hamlet by the ſame teſt; and, without inſerting the words "he ſaid," which render it dramatic, the change will be impoſſible. Try alſo the following lines from Virgil: they are taken from that celebrated and well-known paſſage, where Dido expreſſes to Anna the paſſion ſhe had conceived for Æneas.

Quis novus hic noſtris ſucceſſit ſedibus hoſpes?
Quem ſeſe ore ferens! quam forti pectore et armis!
Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus eſſe deorum, &c.

It may be obſerved in general, that, whenever a ſpeech ſeems proper and intelligible

ligible with the change of perſons above mentioned, and without inſerting ſome ſuch words as, "he ſaid," or, "he replied," it is narration, it is deſcription; but can ſcarcely be called the language of paſſion. I am aware, that ſome paſſages, even in Shakeſpeare, may be oppoſed to this obſervation. When Macbeth returns from the aſſaſſination of Duncan, Lady Macbeth tells him to carry back the daggers, and ſmear with blood the faces of the king's attendants, meaning to faſten upon them the ſuſpicion of the murder. Macbeth replies,

I'll go no more;—
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again, I dare not.

Is this the direct and natural expreſſion of fear? If ſo, it bears hard againſt the foregoing remark. But let us reflect attentively. Fear is not the preſent paſſion in the mind of Macbeth: A tranſient deſire of another kind

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kind for a moment engages him, namely, the desire of giving Lady Macbeth a reason for not returning into the King's apartment. The man who tells you, "I am exceedingly angry, or exceedingly in love, and therefore I act in such or such a manner," does not in these words speak the language either of love or of anger, but of his desire of giving you a reason, or of his making an apology for his behaviour. You believe him, because you trust in his veracity, and because you see corresponding evidence in his deportment; not that the words, "I am angry, or I am in love," independent of tones of voice, looks or gestures, express either love or anger.

An objection of the following kind may also be advanced: "The excellence of dramatic writing consists in its imitating with truth and propriety the manners and passions of mankind: If, therefore, a dramatic

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dramatic writer, capable of deſcribing and of narrating with elegance and propriety, is nevertheleſs incapable of expreſſing the language and ſentiments of paſſion, he fails in the ſole end and purpoſe of his art, and of conſequence can afford no pleaſure. Contrary to this, many tragedies are ſeen and read with uncommon applauſe, and excite even the livelieſt feelings; but which, if they were tried by the abovementioned ſtandard, would be reckoned defective." To remove this objection, it may be obſerved, that thoſe ſympathetic emotions that intereſt us in the happineſs and miſery of others, and yield us the higheſt pleaſure at theatrical entertainments, are, by the wiſe and beneficial inſtitutions of nature, exceedingly apt to be excited: So apt, that if any concomitant circumſtances, though of a different kind, whether melancholy or joyful, draw the mind from its uſual ſtate of indifference, and diſpoſe it to a ſtate of ex-



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treme ſenſibility; the ſlighteſt incident or expreſſion will call forth our ſympathy. Now, in dramatic performances, there are many things to put the mind into a ſuſceptible and tender mood, and chiefly, elegance of expreſſion, harmony of compoſition, and delightful imagery. Theſe working upon the mind, and being all concerned to impreſs us with the notion of certain events or circumſtances very intereſting to perſons of certain qualities and diſpoſitions, our imaginations are immediately ſtimulated and in action; we figure to ourſelves the characters which the poet intends to exhibit; we take part in their intereſts, and enter into their paſſions as warmly as if they were naturally expreſſed. Thus it appears, that it is often with beings of our own formation that we lament or rejoice, imagining them to be the workmanſhip of another. And indeed this deluſion will ever prevail with people of warm imaginations, if what the poet invents

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vents be tolerable, or not worſe than inſipid. We may alſo obſerve, that we are much more ſubject to deluſions of this kind when dramatic performances are exhibited on the ſtage, and have their effect ſupported by the ſcenery, by the dreſſes of the players, and by their action.

If this remark, that our own imaginations contribute highly to the pleaſure we receive from works of invention, be well founded, it will explain the reaſon why men of accurate diſcernment, and of underſtandings ſufficiently poliſhed, often differ widely from one another, and, at times, widely from themſelves, in their opinions concerning works of taſte. The imagination is a faculty of a nature ſo verſatile and ſo variable, that at one time it is animated and fruitful of images; at other times, it is cold, barren, and languiſhing. At a fruitful moment, it will embelliſh the dulleſt performance with the moſt brilliant ornaments; it will im-



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poſe them on you as genuine, and ſo entice you to beſtow applauſe. At other times, it will be niggardly, even of the aſſiſtance that is neceſſary. Hence, too, the reaſon why critics of active imaginations are generally diſpoſed to favour. Read a performance, even of ſlight and ſuperficial merit, to a perſon of a lively fancy, and he will probably applaud. Some ideas ſtrike him: They gather a group of images in his own mind; they pleaſe him, and he perceives not, in the ardour of the operation, that the picture is his own, and not that of the writer. He examines it coolly: The phantom that pleaſed him vaniſhes: He is aſhamed of the delight it yielded him, and of the praiſes he ſo freely beſtowed. It follows alſo, on the ſame principle, that men of lively imaginations receive more exquiſite pleaſure from works of fancy, than thoſe whoſe inventive faculties are not ſo vigorous. Upon the whole, it is manifeſt, that

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that a great portion of the delight we receive from poetry and fine writing, depends no leſs on the ſtate of our own minds, than on the intrinſic excellence of the performance. It is alſo obvious, that, though the deſcription of a paſſion or affection may give us pleaſure, whether it be deſcribed by the agent or the ſpectator, yet, to thoſe who would apply the inventions of the poet to the uſes of philoſophical inveſtigation, it is far from being of equal utility with a paſſion exactly imitated. The talent of imitation is very different from that of deſcription, and far ſuperior *.

No writer has hitherto appeared who poſſeſſes in a more eminent degree than Shakeſpeare, the power of imitating the paſſions. All of them ſeem familiar to



* The author of the Elements of Criticiſm is, if I miſtake not, the firſt writer who has taken any notice of this important diſtinction between the imitation and deſcription of a paſſion.

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him; the boiſterous no leſs than the gentle; the benign no leſs than the malignant. There are ſeveral writers, as there are many players, who are ſucceſsful in imitating ſome particular paſſions, but who appear ſtiff, aukward, and unnatural, in the expreſſion of others. Some are capable of exhibiting very ſtriking repreſentations of reſolute and intrepid natures, but cannot ſo eaſily bend themſelves to thoſe that are ſofter and more complacent. Others, again, ſeem full of amiable affection and tenderneſs, but cannot exalt themſelves to the boldneſs of the hero, or magnanimity of the patriot. The genius of Shakeſpeare is unlimited. Poſſeſſing extreme ſenſibility, and uncommonly ſuſceptible, he is the Proteus of the drama; he changes himſelf into every character, and enters eaſily into every condition of human nature.

O youths and virgins! O declining eld!
O pale misfortune's ſlaves! O ye who dwell

Unknown

Unknown with humble quiet! Ye who wait
In courts, and fill the golden ſeat of kings:
O ſons of ſport and pleaſure! O thou wretch
That weep'ſt for jealous love, and the ſore wound
Of conſcious guilt, or death's rapacious hand
That left thee void of hope! O ye who mourn
In exile! Ye who thro' th' embattled field
Seek bright renown; or who for nobler palms
Contend, the leaders of a public cauſe!
Hath not his faithful tongue
Told you the faſhion of your own eſtate,
The ſecrets of your boſom * ?

Many dramatic writers of different ages are capable, occaſionally, of breaking out, with great fervour of genius, in the natural language of ſtrong emotion. No writer of antiquity is more diſtinguiſhed for abilities of this kind than Euripides. His whole heart and ſoul ſeem torn and agitated by the force of the paſſion he imitates. He ceaſes to be Euripides; he is Medea; he is Oreſtes. Shakeſpeare, however, is moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed, not only by theſe occaſional ſallies, but by



* Akenſide.

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imitating the paſſion in all its aſpects, by purſuing it through all its windings and labyrinths, by moderating or accelerating its impetuoſity according to the influence of other principles and of external events, and finally by combining it in a judicious manner with other paſſions and propenſities, or by ſetting it aptly in oppoſition. He thus unites the two eſſential powers of dramatic invention, that of forming characters; and that of imitating, in their natural expreſſions, the paſſions and affections of which they are compoſed. It is, therefore, my intention to examine ſome of his remarkable characters, and to analyze their component parts: An exerciſe no leſs adapted to improve the heart, than to inform the underſtanding. It is obvious that my deſign by no means coincides with that of the ingenious author of the Eſſay on the Writings and Genius of Shakeſpeare, whoſe ſucceſs in reſcuing the fame of our poet from the attacks of partial criticiſm,

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ticiſm, and in drawing the attention of the public to various excellences in his works which might otherwiſe have eſcaped the notice they deſerve, gives her a juſt title to the reputation ſhe has acquired. My intention is to make poetry ſubſervient to philoſophy, and to employ it in tracing the principles of human conduct. The deſign ſurely is laudable: Of the execution, I have no right to determine.

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# SECTION I.

## ON THE

## CHARACTER OF MACBETH.

THE human mind, in different situations and circumstances, undergoes many extraordinary changes, and assumes a variety of different aspects. Men of gaiety and chearfulness become reserved and unsocial: The beneficent temper, losing its agreeable sweetness, becomes morose: The indolent man leaves his retirement: The man of business becomes inactive: And men of gentle and kind affections acquire habits of cruelty and revenge. As these changes affect the temper, and not

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not the faculties of the mind, they are produced by irregular and outrageous paſſions. In order, therefore, to explain any unuſual alteration of temper or character, we muſt conſider the nature of the ruling paſſion, and obſerve its tendency.

In the character of Macbeth, we have an inſtance of a very extraordinary change. In the following paſſages we diſcover the complexion and bias of his mind in its natural and unperverted ſtate.

> Brave Macbeth, (well he deſerves that name.)
> Diſdaining fortune, with his brandiſh'd ſteel,
> Which ſmok'd with bloody execution,
> Like Valour's minion, carved out his paſſage.

The particular features of his character are more accurately delineated by Lady Macbeth.

> Glamis thou art, and Cawdor;—and ſhalt be
> What thou art promis'd—Yet do I fear thy nature;
> It is too full o'the milk of human kindneſs,
> To catch the neareſt way. Thou would'ſt be great;
> Art not without ambition; but without
> The illneſs ſhould attend it.

He

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He is exhibited to us valiant, dutiful to his Sovereign, mild, gentle, and ambitious: But ambitious without guilt. Soon after, we find him falſe, perfidious, barbarous, and vindictive. All the principles in his conſtitution ſeem to have undergone a violent and total change. Some appear to be altogether reduced or extirpated: Others monſtrouſly overgrown. Ferocity is ſubſtituted inſtead of mildneſs, treaſonable intentions inſtead of a ſenſe of duty. His ambition, however, has ſuffered no diminution: On the contrary, by having become exceedingly powerful, and by riſing to undue pretenſions, it ſeems to have vanquiſhed and ſuppreſſed every amiable and virtuous principle. But, in a conflict ſo important, and where the oppoſing powers were naturally vigorous, and inveſted with high authority, violent muſt have been the ſtruggle, and obſtinate the reſiſtance. Nor could the prevailing paſſion have been



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enabled to contend with virtue, without having gained, at ſome former period, an unlawful aſcendency. Therefore, in treating the hiſtory of this revolution, we ſhall conſider how the uſurping principle became ſo powerful; how its powers were exerted in its conflict with oppoſing principles; and what were the conſequences of its victory.

I. The growth of Macbeth's ambition was ſo imperceptible, and his treaſon ſo unexpected, that the hiſtorians of an ignorant age, little accuſtomed to explain uncommon events by ſimple cauſes, and ſtrongly addicted to a ſuperſtitious belief in ſorcery, aſcribed them to praeternatural agency. And Shakeſpeare, capable of exalting this fiction, and of rendering it intereſting, by his power over the "terrible graces," hath adopted it in its full extent. In this part, therefore, having little aſſiſtance from the poet, we ſhall hazard a conjecture, ſupported by ſome facts and obſervations,

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obſervations, concerning the power of fancy, aided by partial gratification, to invigorate and inflame our paſſions.

All men, who poſſeſs the ſeeds of violent paſſions, will often be conſcious of their influence, before they have opportunities of indulging them. By nature provident, and prone to reflection, we look forward with eagerneſs into futurity, and anticipate our enjoyments. Never completely ſatisfied with our preſent condition, we embrace in imagination the happineſs that is to come. But happineſs is relative to conſtitution: It depends on the gratification of our deſires: And the happineſs of mankind is various; becauſe the deſires of the heart are various. The nature, therefore, of anticipated enjoyment is agreeable to the nature of our deſires. Men of indolent diſpoſitions, and addicted to pleaſure, indulge themſelves in dreams of feſtivity. Thoſe, again, who have in their conſtitution, the



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latent principles of avarice, administer to the gratification of their fatal propenſity, by reveries of ideal opulence. Dignity, parade, and magnificence, are ever preſent to the ambitious man: Laurels, if he purſues literary fame: Battles and conqueſt, if his humour is warlike. Whoever would cultivate an acquaintance with himſelf, and would know to what paſſions he is moſt expoſed, ſhould attend to the operations of fancy, and by remarking the objects ſhe with greateſt pleaſure exhibits, he may diſcern, with tolerable accuracy, the nature of his own mind, and the principles moſt likely to rule him. Excurſions of the imagination, except in minds idly extravagant, are commonly governed by the probability of ſucceſs. They are alſo regulated by moral conſiderations*: For no man indulging viſions of ideal felicity, embrues his hands in

* See Hutcheſon on the origin of our ideas of beauty and harmony.

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in the blood of the guiltleſs, or ſuffers himſelf in imagination to be unjuſt or perfidious. Yet, by this imaginary indulgence, harmleſs as it may appear, our paſſions become immoderate. This is manifeſt from the following obſervations.

When the mind is agitated by violent paſſions, the thoughts preſented to us are of a correſponding character. The angry man thinks of injury, perfidy, or inſult. Under the influences of fear, we figure to ourſelves dangers that have no reality, and tremble without a cauſe.

Vitas hinnuleo me ſimilis, Chloë,
Quaerenti pavidam montibus aviis
Matrem, non ſine vano
Aurarum, et ſilvae metu.
Nam ſeu mobilibus vitis inhorruit
Ad ventum foliis, ſeu viridis rubum
Dimovere lacertae,
Et corde et genibus tremit. HOR.

Minds, differently faſhioned, and under the influence of different paſſions, receive



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from the ſame objects diſſimilar impreſſions. Exhibit the ſame beautiful valley to the miſer and to the poet. Elegant and lovely images ariſe in the poet's mind: Dryads preſide in the groves, and Naiads in the fountains. Notions of wealth ſeize the heart of the miſer: He computes the profits of the meadows and cornfields, and envies the poſſeſſor. The mind, dwelling with pleaſure on theſe images that coincide with its preſent humour, or agree with the preſent paſſion, embelliſhes and improves them. The poet, by figuring additional lawns and mountains, renders the landſcape more beautiful, or more ſublime: But the miſer, moved by no compaſſion for wood-nymphs or naiads, lays waſte the foreſt, changes the windings of the river into a dead canal, and purchaſeth wealth at the expence of beauty. Now, as the influences of paſſion govern and arrange our ideas, theſe, in return, nouriſh and promote



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note the paſſion. If any object appears to us more ſtriking and excellent than uſual, it communicates a ſtronger impulſe, and excites a keener and more vehement deſire. When the lover diſcovers or fancies he diſcovers, new charms in the character of his miſtreſs, if her complection glows with a ſofter bluſh, if her manner and attitude ſeem more engaging, his love waxes ardent, and his ardour ungovernable. Thus imaginary repreſentations, more even than real objects, ſtimulate our deſires, and our paſſions, adminiſtering fewel to themſelves, are immoderately inflamed. Joy is in this manner enlivened; anger more keenly exaſperated; envy burns with additional malice; and melancholy, brooding over her ideas of miſery and diſappointment, is tortured with anguiſh, and plunges into deſpair.

Thus far ambition may be invigorated, aſſiſted meerly by a lively temperament, and a glowing imagination. Prompted by



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its incitements, we engage with eagerneſs in the career of glory; and, with perſevering courage, undergo fatigue and encounter danger. But, though imagination may dazzle and inflame, the prudent man, in the purſuit of honours, limits his deſires to objects within his reach. The moſt active ſpirit, confined to a narrow ſphere, is never deſirous of unattainable glory, but is ambitious of being diſtinguiſhed in his condition. If, however, by ſucceeding in inferior enterprizes, higher objects are exhibited to us, our ambition, by partial gratification, becomes more violent than before. In producing this effect, the following cauſes co-operate.

The temporary and accidental emotion of joy, occaſioned by ſucceſs, enlivens and animates the paſſion upon which it depends. You love your friend; he returns unexpectedly from a long journey; your joy on his arrival heightens your affection, and you receive him with tranſport.

Non

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Non ego ſanius
Bacchabor Edonis: recepto
Dulce mihi furere eſt amico. HOR.

The new object appearing more excellent than the former, excites a livelier appetite. To the churchman, who was meek and moderate in purſuit of inferior dignity, exhibit a mitre, and you ſpoil his peace.

The proximity of the object, becauſe no intermediate ideas divert our attention, quickens and promotes the paſſion. The profligate heir, who longs for the death of an avaricious father, is more eagerly impatient during his laſt moments, than during the courſe of a tedious life. And the nearer the hour of aſſignation approaches, the heart of the lover throbs with a keener and more intenſe deſire. To theſe illuſtrations the following paſſage from a celebrated * hiſtorian, is extremely appoſite: "James, harraſſed with his "turbulent and factious ſubjects, caſt a



* Hume.

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" wiſhful eye to the ſucceſſion of Eng-
" land; and, in proportion as the queen
" advanced in years, his deſire increaſed
" of mounting that throne."

Succeſs, as it produces vanity, invigorates our ambition. Eminently or unexpectedly diſtinguiſhed, we fancy ourſelves endowed with ſuperior merit, and entitled to higher honour. Alexander, after the conqueſt of Perſia, grew more vain and more extravagantly ambitious than before.

In this manner, by joy, by the proſpect, and proximity of a more ſplendid object, and by vanity, all depending on partial gratification, the paſſion is ſwelled, and becomes exceſſive. Macbeth having repelled the inroads of the iſlanders, and having vanquiſhed a numerous hoſt of Norvegians, is rewarded by his king, and revered by his countrymen. He riſes to unexpected honours: His ambition, foſtered by imagination, and confirmed by ſucceſs, becomes immoderate; And his ſoul, elevated

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vated above meaſure, aſpires to ſovereignty.

II. Every variation of character and paſſion is accompanied with correſponding changes in the ſentiments of the ſpectator. Macbeth, engaged in the defence of his country, and purſuing the objects of a laudable ambition, is juſtly honoured and eſteemed. But the diſtraction which enſues from the conflict between vitious and virtuous principles render him the object of compaſſion mixed with diſapprobation.

The chief obſtacle in the way of our ſelfiſh deſires proceeds from the oppoſition of our moral faculties. Inveſted, by nature, with ſupreme authority, to judge concerning the paſſions of mankind, they exert themſelves in reſtraining their impetuoſity, and in preſerving the harmony of the internal ſyſtem. Accordingly, when the notion of ſeizing the crown is



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ſuggeſted to Macbeth, he appears ſhocked and aſtoniſhed. Juſtice and humanity ſhudder at the deſign: He regards his own heart with amazement: And recoils with horror from the guilty thought.

> This ſupernatural ſolliciting
> Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
> Why hath it given me earneſt of ſucceſs,
> Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
> If good, why do I yield to that ſuggeſtion,
> Whoſe horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my ſeated heart knock at my ribs,
> Againſt the uſe of nature?

Though virtuous principles appear in this inſtance to predominate, his ambition is not repulſed. The means of gratifying it ſeem ſhocking and impracticable: And he abandons the enterprize, without renouncing the paſſion. The paſſion continues vehement: It perſeveres with obſtinacy: It harraſſes and importunes him. He ſtill deſires: But, deterred by his moral feelings, he is unable to proceed directly, and indulges romantic wiſhes.

If

If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me,
Without my ſtir.

It appears from this and ſome following paſſages, that, in agony, and diſtracted with contending principles, heſitating and irreſolute, anxious for the event, but fearful of promoting it, he had abandoned the deſign of murdering Duncan, and had formed ſome extravagant expectation of inheriting the crown by right of ſucceſſion. Thus he recovers ſome portion of his tranquillity.

Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs thro' the rougheſt day.

He enjoys an interval of compoſure till an unexpected obſtacle rouzes and alarms him.

*King.* My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulneſs, ſeek to hide themſelves
In drops of ſorrow.—Sons, kinſmen, Thanes,
And you whoſe places are the neareſt, know,
We will eſtabliſh our eſtate upon
Our eldeſt, Malcolm; whom we name hereafter
The prince of Cumberland.

The

The ſurprize, and the uneaſy ſenſation excited by the perception of difficulty, agitate the mind of Macbeth, and their emotions coinciding with his ambition, renew and increaſe its violence.

> The prince of Cumberland!—That is a ſtep,
> On which I muſt fall down, or elſe o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies.

But conſcience and his humanity are again alarmed, again interfere, and ſhew him the horror of his deſigns.

> Stars, hide your fires,
> Let not light ſee my black and deep deſires.

Habituated paſſions poſſeſs ſuperior advantages over thoſe oppoſite principles which operate by a violent and ſudden impulſe. For, ſo delicate is the conſtitution of the human mind, that lively feelings, unleſs they form the temper by being confirmed by action, are enfeebled by repetition and frequent exerciſe. The horror and averſion excited by enormous wickedneſs, unleſs

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leſs we act in conformity to them, "* are "mere paſſive impreſſions, which, by "being repeated, grow weaker;" and though their reſiſtance againſt an habituated paſſion be animated, it is of ſhort duration. They ſubſide: They are overwhelmed; but not extinguiſhed. Macbeth, in the following conference, appears reconciled to the idea of treaſon: He can think of it calmly, and without abhorrence: And all the oppoſition he has henceforth to encounter, will ariſe, not from his feelings, but from reflection.

*Macb.* My deareſt love!
Duncan comes here to night.
*La. Macb.* And when goes hence?
*Macb.* To-morrow, as he purpoſes.
*La. Macb.* O, never
Shall ſun that morrow ſee.
*Macb.* We ſhall ſpeak further.

Inward contention of mind naturally provokes ſoliloquy. The reaſon of this appearance is obvious. In the beginning of life,

* Butler's Analogy, part I. chap. v.

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life, feeble and unable to aſſiſt ourſelves, we depend entirely upon others; we are conſtantly in ſociety; and, of courſe, if we are affected by any violent emotions, we are accuſtomed to utter them. Conſequently, by force of aſſociation and habit, when they return exceſſive on any future occaſion, impatient of reſtraint, they will not be arreſted by reflection, but vent themſelves as they were wont. We may obſerve, in confirmation of this remark, that children are often prone to ſoliloquy: And ſo are men of lively paſſions. In children, the aſſociation is vigorous and entire: In men of lively paſſions, habits are more tenacious than with men of a cooler temperament. When the contending principles are of equal energy, our emotions are uttered in broken and incoherent ſentences, and the diſordered ſtate of our mind is expreſſed by interrupted geſtures, abſence of attention, and an agitated demeanour.

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*Banquo.* Look how our partner's rapt.
*La. Mach.* Your face, my Thane, is as a book, where men
May read ſtrange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time.

But, when the inward diſorder proceeds from the violence of paſſion, unoppoſed by internal feelings, and thwarted only by external circumſtances, anxious for ſucceſs, doubtful concerning the meane, delivered from oppoſing principles, and capable of reflecting, without abhorrence, on intended injury, our ſoliloquies, if we are diſpoſed to them, are more coherent. Macbeth, reaſoning anxiouſly concerning the conſequences of his deſign, reflecting on the opinions of mankind, on the hatred and infamy he muſt incur, and on the reſentment he muſt encounter, overcome by fear, relinquiſhes his undertaking.

If it were *done*, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: If the aſſaſſination
Could tramel up the conſequence, and catch
With his ſurceaſe, ſucceſs; that but this blow

Might

Might be the Be-all and the End-all *here*,
But *here*: upon this bank and ſhoal of time:
We'd jump the life to come.—But, in theſe caſes,
We ſtill have judgment *here*; that we but teach
Bloody inſtructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: This even-handed juſtice
Commends the ingredients of our poiſon'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double truſt:
Firſt, as I am his kinſman and his ſubject,
Strong both againſt the deed; then, as his hoſt,
Who ſhould againſt his murth'rer ſhut the door,
Not bear the knife myſelf. Beſides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties ſo meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead, like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, againſt
The deep damnation of his taking off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blaſt, or heavens cherubin, hors'd
Upon the ſightleſs couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in ev'ry eye;
That tears ſhall drown the wind.—
We will proceed no further in this buſineſs:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all ſorts of people,
Which ſhould be worn now in their neweſt gloſs,
Not caſt aſide ſo ſoon.

Thus, the irregular paſſion is again repulſed: Yet ſymptoms of the decay of virtue

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virtue are manifeſt. Immediate inſtinctive averſion, in caſes of cenſure, accompanies the deciſions of our moral faculty: And thoſe who are deterred from crimes, merely by the dread of puniſhment, and a regard to the opinions of mankind, betray a vitiated and depraved conſtitution *. The lively feelings, oppoſed to ambition, unable, by the vivacity of their firſt impreſſion, to extirpate the habit, languiſh, and are enfeebled. The irregular paſſion, like the perſevering Fabius, gathers ſtrength by delay: the virtuous principle, like the gallant, but unſupported Hannibal, ſuffers diminution, even by ſucceſs. Thus, it is manifeſt, that the conteſt between the obſtinacy of an habituated paſſion, and the vehemence of an animated feeling, is unequal; and that there is infinite danger even in the apparently innocent and imaginary indulgence of

* Tu nihil admittes in te formidine poenae;
Sit ſpes fallendi, miſcebis ſacra profanis. Hor.

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of a ſelfiſh paſſion. The harmony of the internal ſyſtem is nicely adjuſted; and the exceſſive tenſion or relaxation of any of the parts produces irregular and diſcordant tones.

The opinions of mankind are variable: For nations and communities, no leſs than individuals, are liable to prejudice. Particular emergencies and prepoſſeſſions miſlead the judgment; and we applaud, at one time, what we blame at another. A ſyſtem of conduct, founded on the opinion of others, is, therefore, unſtable, inconſiſtent, and often vitious. Macbeth, conſidering the aſſaſſination of Duncan as a deed deſerving puniſhment, is deterred from his enterprize; but, reflecting upon it as an event which he deſired, but durſt not accompliſh, his courage is queſtioned, and his honour impeached. When the ſenſe of honour is corrupted, virtue expires. Influenced by fatal prejudices, and, flattering himſelf with the hope of impunity, he

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he finally determines himself, and engages to execute the black design.

*La. Mach.* Art thou afraid
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that,
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem?
Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would?*
*Mach.* Pr'ythee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man,—
If we should fail!
*La. Mach.* We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep, &c.
*Mach.* I'm settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

In the natural and healthful state of the mind, all its operations are regular and correct. The external organs of the senses, corresponding with memory, present ideas to the understanding; and we regulate our actions according to the notices they communicate. But, when the mind is seized and occupied by violent passions, its operations are disturbed, and



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the notices we receive from the ſenſes are diſregarded. The ſoldier, in the field of battle, eager to ſignalize his valour, perceives not that he is wounded, till he falls. The prieſts of Cybele, actuated by wild enthuſiaſm, inflicted wounds on their own bodies, and ſeemed inſenſible of the pain. In like manner, the notices communicated to the ſoul of Macbeth, agitated and ſhaken by tumultuous paſſions, are wild, broken, and incoherent: And reaſon, beaming at intervals, heightens the horror of his diſorder.

Is this a dagger which I ſee before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch
thee:—
I have thee not; and yet I ſee thee ſtill.
Art thou not, fatal viſion! ſenſible
To feeling as to ſight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind; a falſe creation
Proceeding from the heat-oppreſſed brain?
I ſee thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.—
Thou marſhal'ſt me the way that I was going;
And ſuch an inſtrument I was to uſe.

Mine

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other ſenſes,
Or elſe worth all the reſt:—I ſee thee ſtill;
And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not ſo before.—There's no ſuch thing.

Let us review the conflict. Ambition grown habitual and inveterate in the ſoul of Macbeth, ſuggeſts the idea of aſſaſſination. The ſenſe of virtue, compaſſion, and other kindred principles, are alarmed, and oppoſe. His ruling paſſion is repulſed, but not enfeebled. Reſigning himſelf to the hope of profiting by ſome future emergency, he renounces the idea of violence. A difficulty appears: It renews, rouzes, and inflames his ambition. The principles of virtue again oppoſe; but, by exerciſe and repetition, they are, for a time, enfeebled: They excite no abhorrence: And he reflects, with compoſure, on his deſign. But, in reflecting, the apprehenſion of danger, and the fear of retribution alarm him. He abandons his purpoſe; is deemed irreſolute: Not leſs



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innocent for not daring to execute what he dares to desire, he is charged with cowardice: Impatient of the charge, and indignant; harrassed by fear, by the consciousness of guilt, and by humanity struggling to resume her influence, he rushes headlong on his bane.

III. We come now to consider the effects produced in the mind of Macbeth, by the indulgence of the vitious passion. Invested with royalty, he has attained the summit of his desires. His ambition is completely gratified. Will he, therefore, enjoy repose? Unmolested by anxiety and fruitless wishes, will he enjoy the happiness of his condition, and the dignity he has so dearly purchased? Or will the principles of virtue that opposed his preferment, baffled and put to shame, submit, without murmuring, to the yoke; and, unable to recal the past, acquiesce, and be silent?

All

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All cases of internal conflict and commotion suppose vigorous and opposing principles. But principles inherent in our constitutions are seldom extirpated. Suppose them vanquished. The contending passion is gratified. A passion, when gratified, ceases to operate: It no longer exists; and the mind is left vacant. But passions or propensities that have been suppressed by incompatible and more powerful principles, still remain in the mind; and when opposition is removed, they arise and resume their station. The profligate, hurried away by unruly appetites, plunges into every species of excess: And when his desires are sated, conscience, formerly active, but disregarded, overwhelms him with deep contrition. This state of mind continues, till the irregular appetites recover strength, solicit indulgence, and are obeyed. Regret follows: And his life is thus divided between the extravagance of illicit desire, and the



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deſpondency of repentance. In Macbeth, the amiable and congenial ſentiments of humanity and compaſſion, a ſenſe of duty, and a regard to the opinions of mankind contended with ambition. Their efforts were ineffectual, but their principles were not extinguiſhed. Formerly, they warned and intreated; but, when the deed is perpetrated, and no adverſary is oppoſed to them, they return with violence, they accuſe and condemn. Macbeth, alarmed by his feelings, now operating without controul, reflects with aſtoniſhment on his conduct; and his ſoul, darkened with horror, ſhudders and is confounded at the atrocity of his guilt. He feels himſelf the object of univerſal hatred and indignation. Religious ſentiments, formerly weak and diſregarded, are animated by his confuſion; and, borrowing their complexion from his preſent temper, they terrify and overwhelm him. Amazed at the atrocity of his own proceedings,

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ceedings, conſcious of perfidy and injuſtice, and of the reſentment they will excite; apprehenſive, that both heaven and earth are ſtirred up againſt him, his fancy is haunted with tremenduous images, and his ſoul diſtracted with remorſe and terror.

I have done the deed:—Did'ſt thou not hear a noiſe?
There's one did laugh in his ſleep, and one cried,
*Murther!*
That they did wake each other; I ſtood and heard them.——
One cried, *God bleſs us!* and, *Amen!* the other;
As they had ſeen me with theſe hangman's hands
Liſtening their fear, I could not ſay, Amen,
When they did ſay, God bleſs us.——
But wherefore could not I pronounce, Amen?
I had moſt need of bleſſing, and Amen
Stuck in my throat.——
Methought I heard a voice cry, *Sleep no more!*
*Macbeth doth murder ſleep.*
Still it cry'd, *Sleep no more!* to all the houſe;
*Glamis hath murder'd ſleep*; and therefore Cawdor
Shall ſleep no more, Macbeth ſhall ſleep no more.

Macbeth, elevated with high and aſpiring wiſhes, dazzled with the glare of



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royalty, and inſtigated by keen ambition, cheriſheth opinions bordering on impiety; and, thoughts of retribution in a future ſtate of exiſtence ſeeming to affect him ſlightly, he would "jump the life to come." But, having perpetrated the bloody deed, every noiſe appals him; and, when others prefer their oriſons to heaven, he cannot ſay Amen.

If impelled by irregular and headſtrong paſſions, we not only tranſgreſs the limits of rectitude, but are guilty of heinous acts of oppreſſion and violence, reflecting on the ſentiments of mankind, and meaſuring them by our own, we imagine ourſelves no leſs abhorred by the ſpectator, than by the ſufferer. Conſcious of our crimes, and apprehenſive of the reſentment and indignation they have neceſſarily excited, we dread the puniſhment they deſerve, and endeavour to avoid it. By ſuſpicion and diſtruſt, the neceſſary offspring of treachery, the

ſoul

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ſoul is for ever tormented. Perfidious ourſelves, we repoſe no confidence in mankind, and are incapable of friendſhip. We are particularly fearful of all thoſe to whom eminent virtue and integrity have given a ſtrong ſenſe of injuſtice, and to whom wiſdom and intrepidity have given power to puniſh. Prompted by our fears, we hate every amiable and exalted character, we wage war with the virtuous, and endeavour, by their deſtruction, to prevent our own. So tyrannical is the dominion of vice, that it compels us to hate what nature, having ordained for our benefit, has rendered lovely, and recommended to our eſteem.

To be thus, is nothing,
But to be ſafely thus:—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,
And, to that dauntleſs temper of his mind,
He hath a wiſdom that doth guide his valour

To

To act in ſafety. There is none but he,
Whoſe being I do fear: and under him
My genius is rebuk'd.

Whoever poſſeſſes high ideas of the rights of mankind, of the ſanctity of friendſhip, and of the duty we owe to legal authority; whoever with theſe poſſeſſes a heart ſuſceptible of tenderneſs and of compaſſion, will have a higher ſenſe of injury and injuſtice than men of colder complexions, and leſs ſtrongly impreſſed with the importance of ſocial duties. Therefore, if a man of uncommon ſenſibility, adorned with amiable and beneficent diſpoſitions, miſled by ſome pernicious appetite, commits acts of cruelty and oppreſſion, he will be more apt, by reflecting on his own conduct, to conceive the reſentment and indignation it excites, than men of a different temper. Reflecting on the compaſſion and reſentment that would have ariſen in his own mind, on the view of crimes ſimilar to thoſe

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thoſe he has himſelf perpetrated, he becomes afraid of the puniſhment he would himſelf have inflicted. Thus, inſtigated by his fears, and, imagining himſelf univerſally hated, he conceives a ſentiment of univerſal hatred: and, as his fears are exactly proportioned to his feelings and ſenſibility, ſo are his hatred and malevolence. In like manner, a man of no ſenſibility, of little beneficence, and poſſeſſing no high idea of ſocial obligation, carried by his avarice or his ambition to commit acts of injuſtice, and having no lively conceptions, from his own feelings, of the reſentment he has excited, will, conſequently, be leſs afraid of mankind, and of courſe, leſs violent in his hatred. It follows, that, in the circumſtances of having procured undue poſſeſſions by inhuman means, and of deſiring to preſerve them, men of innate ſenſibility will be more cruel and ſanguinary, than men naturally ſevere, rugged, and inſenſible.

May

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May not theſe obſervations unravel a ſeeming difficulty in the hiſtories of Sylla, and Auguſtus, of Nero, and of Herod? Sylla and Auguſtus, naturally ſevere, having attained the ſummit of their deſires, had no imaginary apprehenſions of puniſhment, and ended their days in peace. Nero and Herod, naturally of ſoft and amiable diſpoſitions, betrayed by unruly paſſions, committed acts of cruelty, were conſcious of their crimes, dreaded the reſentment they deſerved, and, in order to avoid it, became infamous and inhuman. By conſidering Sylla and Auguſtus in this light, ſome extraordinary circumſtances in their conduct, much celebrated by ſome modern writers, namely the reſignation of the dictatorſhip by the one, and the apparent clemency of the other, after he aroſe to the imperial dignity, ſeem diveſted of their merit; and, without having recourſe to moderate or magnanimous ſentiments, may eaſily be explained, as being

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being perfectly consonant to the general tone of their characters. Sylla resigned the dictatorship, without any dread of suffering punishment for his antecedent cruelties, not because he had extirpated all those he had injured, but because his sensibility and his power of discerning moral excellence being originally languid, he felt no abhorrence of his own ferocity; and therefore, incapable of conceiving how any but real sufferers should feel or resent his barbarity, he was incapable of apprehension. Augustus, naturally of an unfeeling temper, committed inhuman actions in pursuing the honours he aspired to, and having established his authority as absolutely and as independently as he wished for, he had no sense of his former inhumanity, had no regret for the past, and no fear of the future. Reasoning on the same principles, we may easily reconcile some appearances of benignity and tender affection in the conduct of Nero and

and of Herod, to their natural and original diſpoſitions. That, in the early part of their lives, they diſcovered gentle and benign affections, is unqueſtioned. But their ſubſequent cruelties, and particularly, thoſe related by eccleſiaſtical writers, have led men, indignant of their crimes, to pronounce them, in the very ſtructure and conſtitution of their minds, monſtrous and inhuman. Thus, from exceſſive reſentment and indignation, we leſſen the enormity of their guilt, charging that ferocity upon nature, which was the effect of their own impetuous and ungoverned paſſions. Senſibility is in itſelf amiable, and diſpoſes us to benevolence: but, in corrupted minds, by infuſing terror, it produces hatred and inhumanity. So dangerous is the dominion of vice, that being eſtabliſhed in the mind, it bends to its baneful purpoſes even the principles of virtue. Lady Macbeth, of a character invariably ſavage, perhaps too ſavage to be a genuine repre-



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repreſentation of nature *, proceeds eaſily, and without reluctance, to the contrivance of the blackeſt crimes. Macbeth, of a ſofter temper, and full of the "milk of "human kindneſs," ſtruggles, and is reluctant. Lady Macbeth encourages and incites him. He commits the deed, trembles, and is filled with horror. Lady Macbeth enjoys perfect compoſure, is neither ſhocked nor terrified, and reproves him for his fears.

> Why, worthy Thane,
> Do you unbend your noble ſtrength to think
> So brain-ſickly of things?——
> My hands are of your colour, but I ſcorn
> To wear a heart ſo white.

Macbeth, inſtigated by his apprehenſions, meditates another act of barbarity. Lady Macbeth, ſo far from being afraid of conſequences, or from having contrived another aſſaſſination, is even ignorant of his intentions; but on being informed of them, ſhe very eaſily acquieſces.

* Elements of criticiſm.

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*La. Mac.* Come on; gentle my lord,
Sleek o'er your rugged looks; be bright and jovial
Among your guests to-night.
*Mac.* O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st, that Banquo, and his Fleance lives.
*La. Mac.* What's to be done?
*Mac.* Be innocent of the knowledge,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond,
Which keeps me pale.

Macbeth, instigated by his terrors, adds one act of cruelty to another; and thus, instead of vanquishing his fears, he augments them. His agony increases, and renders him still more barbarous and distrustful.

There's not a thane of them, but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd.—
The castle of Macduff I will surprize, &c.

He, at length, meets with the punishment due to his enormous cruelty.

*Macduff.* Hail, king! for so thou art. Behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursed head.

Thus,



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Thus, by conſidering the riſe and progreſs of a ruling paſſion, and the fatal conſequences of its indulgence, we have ſhown, how a beneficent mind may become inhuman: And how thoſe who are naturally of an amiable temper, if they ſuffer themſelves to be corrupted, will become more ferocious and more unhappy than men of a conſtitution originally hard and unfeeling. The formation of our characters depends conſiderably upon ourſelves; for we may improve, or vitiate, every principle we receive from nature.



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## SECTION II.

### ON THE

## CHARACTER OF HAMLET.

IN analyzing the mind of Hamlet, I ſhall accompany him in his different ſituations. I ſhall obſerve the various principles of action that govern him in various circumſtances; and ſum up the whole with a general view of his character.

In his firſt appearance, he diſcovers grief, averſion, and indignation. Theſe emotions are in themſelves indifferent: they are neither objects of cenſure nor of applauſe: They are of a ſecondary nature, and ariſe from ſome antecedent paſſion or affection.

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affection. To judge, therefore, of their propriety, we muſt examine their motives, and the temper or ſtate of mind that produces them. For we may grieve for the loſs of a vitious gratification, no leſs than for thoſe that are virtuous: And we may conceive averſion at worthy characters, no leſs than at their oppoſites. But the grief of Hamlet is for the death of a father: He entertains averſion againſt an inceſtuous uncle, and indignation at the ingratitude and guilt of a mother. Grief is paſſive: If its object be irretrievably loſt, it is attended with no deſires, and rouſes no active principle. After the firſt emotions, it diſpoſes us to ſilence, ſolitude, and inaction. If it is blended with other paſſions, its operations will paſs unnoticed, loſt in the violence of other emotions, though even theſe it may have originally excited, and may ſecretly ſtimulate. Accordingly, though ſorrow be manifeſt in the features and demeanour of Hamlet,



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averſion and indignation are the feelings he expreſſes. Averſion not only implies diſlike and diſapprobation of certain qualities, but alſo an apprehenſion of ſuffering by their communion; and, conſequently, a deſire of avoiding them. As it ariſes on the view of groveling and ſordid qualities, we treat the character they belong to with contempt, rather than with indignation. They influence the imagination; we turn from them with diſguſt and loathing, as if they were capable of tainting us by their contagion; and, if thoſe that poſſeſs them diſcover any expectation of our regarding them, we are offended at their pretenſions. Claudius, endeavouring to careſs and flatter Hamlet, of whoſe virtues and abilities he is afraid, thinks of honouring him by a claim of conſanguinity, and is replied to with ſymptoms of averſion and deep contempt. Yet Hamlet delivers himſelf ambiguouſly,



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inclined to vent his displeasure, but unwilling to incur suspicion.

*King.* But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—
*Ham.* A little more than kin, and less than kind.
*King.* How is it, that the clouds still hang on you?
*Ham.* Not so, my Lord, I am too much i'the sun.

Aversion has no reference to any thing amiable or respectable. Indignation is different. It arises, as the etymology of the word indicates, from the sense of something unworthy. But the unworthy in human conduct affects us by contrast: And this contrast is either between the antecedent behaviour or imagined good character of the agent, and the particular actions that expose him to our present censure; or it is between the merits of a sufferer, and the injuries he sustains. We say, your deed is unworthy, if you act inconsistently with your usual good conduct; and that you suffer unworthily, if behaving honourably you are defamed. The indignation of Hamlet arises from both of

theſe ſources, both from the merit of his father, and from the behaviour of Gertrude. It is, therefore, vehement. But, as the circumſtances of the times render it dangerous for him to diſcover his ſentiments, and the real ſtate of his mind, he governs them, as far as the ardour of his emotions allows him, and diſguiſes their external ſymptoms. His indignation labours for utterance: And his reaſon ſtrives to reſtrain it. He inveighs with keenneſs, but obliquely, againſt the inſincerity of Gertrude's ſorrow; and, in an indirect, but ſtinging manner, oppoſes her duty to her actual conduct.

Seems, Madam? nay, it is; I know not *ſeems*,
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor cuſtomary ſuits of ſolemn black,
Nor windy ſuſpiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'haviour of the viſage,
Together with all forms, modes, ſhews of grief,
That can denote me truly.—Theſe, indeed, ſeem,
For they are actions that a man might play:

But

But I have that within, which paſſeth ſhew;
Theſe, but the trappings, and the ſuits of woe.

The human mind, poſſeſſed of diſtinguiſhed faculties, and actuated by various principles, is, nevertheleſs, extremely limited. As the underſtanding is capable of attending but to a certain number of objects at a time; ſo the heart is never at the ſame time influenced by a number of violent paſſions. Perhaps there is a greater difference in the minds of men, in regard to the capacity of the underſtanding, than in regard to that of the heart: One man, perhaps, may contemplate at the ſame moment a wider range of ideas than another, but cannot, at the ſame moment, be agitated by a greater number of paſſions. It may, indeed, be a queſtion, how far the capacity of the underſtanding may not influence the paſſions. In governing them, it may have ſome effect, as it may enable us to conſider the object of our emotions under different aſpects. For,



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does it not often happen, that a partial view of an object renders the paſſion it excites more violent? Yet, if the ſoul is exceedingly moved, our thoughts will not ariſe in their natural and common order, but will be entirely regulated by the preſent paſſion or ſtate of mind. It is a certain fact, confirmed by univerſal experience, and it may be laid down as an important axiom in the ſtudy of human nature, that our notions and opinions are ever influenced by our preſent temper. Happy is the man who is often calm and diſpaſſionate, who, impelled by no eager appetite, nor urged by any reſtleſs affection, ſees every object by the unerring light of reaſon, and is not impoſed upon by the fallacious medium of his deſires. Men of a ſuſceptible nature, the prey of ſucceſſive emotions, forever happy or miſerable in extremes, often capricious and inconſiſtent, ought to cheriſh their lucid intervals, and dwell upon, and treaſure

up

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up in their minds thoſe maxims of wiſdom and of virtue, that, in times of internal tumult, may aſſuage their diſorder, and adminiſter peace to their ſouls. In conſequence of the limited nature of the human heart, ever apt to be engroſſed and occupied by preſent emotions, and of the power of paſſion to enſlave the underſtanding, and poſſeſs it with notions ſuited to its own complexion; the mind of Hamlet, violently agitated, and filled with diſpleaſing and painful images, loſes all ſenſe of felicity; and he even wiſhes for a change of being. The appearance is wonderful, and leads us to inquire into the affections and opinions that could render him ſo deſpondent. The death of his father was a natural evil, and as ſuch he endures it. That he is excluded from ſucceeding immediately to the royalty that belongs to him, ſeems to affect him ſlightly; for to vehement and vain ambition he appears ſuperior. He is moved by

by finer principles, by an exquiſite ſenſe of virtue, of moral beauty and turpitude. The impropriety of Gertrude's behaviour, her ingratitude to the memory of her former huſband, and the depravity ſhe diſcovers in the choice of a ſucceſſor, afflict his ſoul, and caſt him into utter agony. Here then is the principle and ſpring of all his actions: Let us obſerve it cloſely, as it excites other feelings and affections, unites or contends with him, is inflamed as they are inflamed, and governed as they are governed.

It is acknowledged, even by men of corrupted manners, that there is in human nature, a ſupreme, and, in many caſes, a powerful principle that pronounces ſentence on the conduct of mankind, and, in well-regulated tempers, is a ſource of anguiſh or of delight. In minds uncommonly excellent, it is more frequently a fountain of bitter ſuffering, than of immediate pleaſure. This may ſeem a paradox;

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dox; but, by reflecting on the following brief obſervations, the difficulty will diſappear. If our ſenſe of virtue is exceedingly refined, or, in other words, if our ſtandard of moral excellence is exceedingly elevated, comparing our own conduct with this exalted meaſure, and perceiving the difference, our joy on acting agreeably to the dictates of reaſon will ſuffer abatement. Add to this, that ingenuous minds, happy in the conſciouſneſs of their integrity, yet afraid of arrogating too much honour to themſelves, will diminiſh the value of their good actions rather than augment it. The ſame delicacy of moral ſentiment, the ſame elevated idea of perfection, will heighten the miſery of a good man, if he accuſes himſelf of any treſpaſs. It is not the dread of puniſhment, for puniſhment is not always inflicted; it is not the pain of infamy, for wicked deeds may be done in ſecret; but it is the rebuke

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rebuke of an internal cenſor, who will neither be flattered nor deceived.

Oimè ſon ió ſon io.
Che giova ch' io non oda e non paventi
I ditti 'el mormorar dell folle volgo,
O l' accuſe de ſaggi, o i fieri morſi
Di troppo acuto o velenoſo dente?
Se la mia propria conſcienza immonda
Altamente nel cor rimbomba e mugge.
Il Torriſmondo dell Taſſo.

The man whoſe ſenſe of moral excellence is uncommonly exquiſite, will find it a ſource of pleaſure and of pain in his commerce with mankind. Suſceptible of every moral impreſſion, the diſplay of virtuous actions will yield him delight, and the contrary excite uneaſineſs. He will not receive that genuine and ſupreme felicity in aſſociating with the wealthy and the magnificent, the gay and the loquacious, if they have nothing in their hearts to recommend them, that he will enjoy in the ſociety of gentle, benevolent, and enlightened ſpirits, though they are not the favourites

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favourites of fortune, and have not that glitter and falſe brilliancy of intellectual endowments, that dazzle without being uſeful, yet often recommend men of ſlender abilities, and leſs virtue, to the attention of mankind. As moral qualities are thoſe, principally, that produce and cement his attachments, the eſteem he entertains for his aſſociates will be exactly proportioned to their degree of merit. To eraze an eſtabliſhed affection, and ſubſtitute averſion, or even indifference, in its ſtead, does unutterable violence to our nature; and to ſee thoſe, for whom we have contracted habits of attachment and regard, act inconſiſtently with their former conduct, and appear with diſpoſitions of an immoral kind, and ſo lay the ax to the root of our faireſt friendſhips, overwhelms us with cruel anguiſh: Our affliction will bear an exact proportion to our former tenderneſs, and conſequently, to our idea of former merit. Add to this, that even a ſlight

a ſlight tranſgreſſion in thoſe we eſteem; if it is evidently a tranſgreſſion, will affect us more ſenſibly than a groſs enormity committed by a perſon indifferent to us. So delicate is your affection; and ſo refined your ſenſe of moral excellence, when the moral faculty is ſoftened into a tender attachment, that the ſanctity and purity of the heart you love muſt appear to you without a ſtain. The triumph and inward joy of a ſon, on account of the fame and the high deſert of a parent, is of a nature very ſublime and tender. His ſorrow is no leſs acute and overwhelming, if thoſe, united to him by a connection ſo intimate, have acted unbecomingly, and have incurred diſgrace. Such is the condition of Hamlet. Exquiſitely ſenſible of moral beauty and deformity, he diſcerns turpitude in a parent. Surprize, on a diſcovery ſo painful and unexpected, adds bitterneſs to his ſorrow; and led, by the ſame moral principle, to admire and glory in the high

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high deſert of his father, even this admiration contributes to his uneaſineſs. Averſion to his uncle, ariſing from the ſame origin, has a ſimilar tendency, and augments his anguiſh. All theſe feelings and emotions uniting together, are rendered ſtill more violent, exaſperated by his recent interview with the Queen, ſtruggling for utterance, but reſtrained. Agitated and overwhelmed with afflicting images, no ſoothing, no exhilarating affection can have admiſſion into his heart. His imagination is viſited by no viſion of happineſs; and he wiſhes for deliverance from his afflictions, by being delivered from a painful exiſtence.

O, that this too too ſolid fleſh would melt,
Thaw, and reſolve itſelf into a dew!
Or that the Everlaſting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainſt ſelf-ſlaughter. O God, O God!
How weary, ſtale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uſes of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to ſeed; things rank, and groſs in nature,
Poſſeſs it merely.

By

By giving vent to any paſſion, its violence at the time increaſes. Thoſe, for inſtance, who expreſs their ſorrow by ſhedding tears, find themſelves at the inſtant of weeping more exceſſively affected than perſons of a more reſerved and inflexible conſtitution. Yet, by thus giving vent to their inquietude, they find relief, while thoſe of a taciturn humour are the victims of painful and unabating anxiety: And, the reaſon is, that the emotion, raiſed to its higheſt extreme, can no longer continue equally violent, and ſo ſubſides. In caſes of this nature, that is, when emotions, by being expreſſed, become exceſſive, the mind paſſes from general reflections to minute and particular circumſtances: And imagination, the pliant flatterer of the paſſion in power, renders theſe circumſtances ſtill more particular, and better adapted to promote its vehemence. In the foregoing lines the reflections are general; but, in theſe that follow,

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low, they become particular; and the emotion waxing ſtronger, the imagination, by exhibiting ſuitable images, and by fitting to its purpoſe even the time between the death and the marriage, renders it exceſſive.

That it ſhould come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not ſo much; not two:
So excellent a king, that was, to this,
Hyperion to a ſatyr! So loving to my mother,
That he might not let e'en the winds of heaven
Viſit her face too roughly.

The emotion grows ſtill more vehement, and overflows the mind with a tide of correſponding images.

Heaven and earth!
Muſt I remember? Why, ſhe would hang on him,
As if increaſe of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—

Obſerve too, that Hamlet's indignation is augmented gradually, by admiration of his father, 'So excellent a king;' by abhorrence of Claudius, 'That was to this,



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'Hyperion to a Satyr;' and, finally, by a ſtinging reflection on the Queen's inconſtancy:

> Why, ſhe would hang on him,
> As if increaſe of appetite had grown
> By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—

This affects him ſo ſeverely, that he ſtrives to obliterate the idea:

> Let me not think on't—

By this effort he loſes ſight, for a moment, of the particular circumſtances that gave him pain. The impreſſion, however, is not entirely effaced; and he expreſſes it by a general reflection.

> Frailty, thy name is woman!

This expreſſion is too refined and artificial for a mind ſtrongly agitated: Yet, it agrees entirely with juſt ſuch a degree of emotion and penſiveneſs as diſpoſes us to moralize. Conſidered as the language of a man violently affected, it is improper:

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per: Conſidered in relation to what goes before and follows after, it appears perfectly natural. Hamlet's laboured compoſure is imperfect; it is exceedingly tranſient; and he relapſes into deeper anguiſh. Though he turned aſide from a painful idea, he was unable to remove the impreſſion, or vary in any conſiderable degree his ſtate of mind: The impreſſion remained, and reſtored the idea in its fulleſt vigour.

A little month; or ere thoſe ſhoes were old,
With which ſhe follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears—Why, ſhe, even ſhe—
O heaven! a beaſt, that wants diſcourſe of reaſon,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules.

It is alſo obſervable, that, in conſequence of the increaſing violence of his emotion, the time ſo dexterouſly diminiſhed from two months, to a little month, and to even leſs than a little month, is



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rendered as it were visible by allusions and circumstances so striking, as to have in themselves a powerful tendency to stimulate and augment his anguish.

Or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body, &c.

And again:

Within a month—
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing on her gauled eyes—
She married!

The crisis of his agitation heightened to its extremity, is strongly marked in the following exclamation:

Oh, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!

The observation following immediately after, is that of a mind reflecting with some composure, on effects and consequences.

It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

Hamlet

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Hamlet in his retirement expreſſes his agony without reſerve, and by giving it utterance he receives relief. In public he reſtrains it, and welcomes his friends with that eaſe and affability which are the reſult of poliſhed manners, good ſenſe, and humanity. His converſation, though familiar, is graceful: Yet, in his demeanour we diſcover a certain air of penſiveneſs and ſolemnity, ariſing naturally from his internal trouble.

*Hor.* Hail to your Lordſhip!

*Ham.* I am glad to ſee you well;
Horatio,—or I do forget myſelf?

*Hor.* The ſame, my Lord, and your poor ſervant ever.

*Ham.* Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus!

*Mar.* My good Lord—

*Ham.* I am very glad to ſee you; good Even, Sir,
—But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

*Hor.* A truant diſpoſition, good my Lord.

*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy ſay ſo;
Nor ſhall you do mine ear that violence,

To make it truſter of your own report
Againſt yourſelf. I know, you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elſenour?
We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.
*Hor.* My Lord, I came to ſee your father's funeral.

On a ſubject ſo intereſting as his father's funeral, he cannot eaſily command himſelf: And, repoſing confidence in the loyalty of his friend, he does not entirely diſguiſe his emotion. He corrects it, however; and avoiding any appearance of violence or of extravagance, he expreſſes himſelf with humour.

I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow ſtudent;
I think, it was to ſee my mother's wedding.
*Hor.* Indeed, my Lord, it follow'd hard upon.
*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furniſh forth the marriage tables.

Yet he is too violently agitated to preſerve, uniformly, the character of a cheerful ſatiriſt. He becomes ſerious.

Would I had met my deareſt foe in heaven,
Or ever I had ſeen that day, Horatio.

Having

Having expreſſed himſelf ſtrongly, and poſſeſſing a delicate ſenſe of propriety, he thinks it neceſſary to explain the cauſe. About to preface it with an account of his father, he mentions him:

My father—

The idea ſtrikes his mind with a ſudden and powerful impulſe: He pauſes: Forgets his intention of explaining himſelf to Horatio: The image of his father poſſeſſes him: And, by the moſt ſolemn and ſtriking apoſtrophe that ever poet invented, he impreſſes it on his audience.

Methinks, I ſee my father!
*Hor.* O where, my Lord?
*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Returning from his reverie, he mentions his character to Horatio, not by a particular detail, but in a ſummary manner, as if it were the reſult of a preceding enumeration. Horatio, aſtoniſhed at his abſtracted aſpect and demeanour, and



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having imagined that he ſaw the appariti-on which he had himſelf beheld, by a natural and eaſy tranſition, makes mention of the ghoſt.

*Hor.* I ſaw him once, he was a goodly king.
*Ham.* He was a man, take him for all in all,
I ſhall not look upon his like again.
*Hor.* My Lord, I think, I ſaw him yeſternight, &c.

The whole of this ſcene between Hamlet and his friends is maſterly and affecting. Hamlet, exceedingly moved, expreſſes amazement: Yet he utters nothing verboſe and extravagant, nor any violent exclamation of wonder. The narration is ſimple and the dialogue eaſy. Though the prince can entertain no doubt of the veracity of his friends, he is not credulous: And he queſtions them very minutely concerning the circumſtances of the prodigy. His inquiries indicate extreme uneaſineſs, and even ſuſpicion concerning his father's death: Yet he moderates his apprehenſions, and will not indulge

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dulge his ſuſpicion, till, by the teſtimony of his ſenſes, he is aſſured of the fact.

I'll watch to-night; perchance, 'twill walk again.

I cannot quit this admirable ſcene, without remarking the ſuperiority of a natural, ſimple, and unaffected dialogue to the vanity of figurative and elaborate diction. It has been of late inſinuated, that poetical genius is on the decline, and that, if modern dramatic writers abound in declamation and artificial ornament inſtead of the language of nature, it is owing to the languor and ſterility of their invention. May not the cauſe be different? Are we confident, if there was exhibited to us a genuine repreſentation of human paſſions and manners, conveyed in artleſs unaffected language, that we would comply with the admonitions of nature, and applaud as our feelings dictate? Are we confident that the pride of learning and the vanity of poſſeſſing critical diſcern-

ment,

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ment, do not impoſe on our better judgement, and that we are not more attentive to the harmony of a period, than to the happy utterance of an ardent paſſion?

Hamlet, in ſome of the foregoing paſſages, betrays ſuſpicion. But ſuſpicion is not natural to a humane and ingenuous temper. Is it, therefore, a blemiſh, or the reſult of an amiable diſpoſition influenced by a ſenſe of virtue?

It is a property of the imagination, when governed by any paſſion or opinion, to follow the impulſe it has received, and to diminiſh or aggrandize any object not perfectly known to us, according to the judgment we may have formed of it. Under the influence of fear, men, tainted with ſuperſtition, people darkneſs and the night with ſpectres, and terrify and torment themſelves with imaginary danger. If we are threatened with any unuſual calamity, the nature and extent of which is unknown to us, governed by our terrors, we

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we render its ſtature gigantic: But, if actuated by an intrepid ſpirit, we brave and undervalue it; approaching to temerity and overweening confidence, we are apt to leſſen it beyond its real ſize. If a man of plauſible manners, dextrous in diſplaying his genius and underſtanding, ſecures your eſteem, and an opinion of his being endowed with uncommon abilities, you ſet no limits to his capacity, and, imagining him wiſer and more ingenious than he really is, you are almoſt led to revere him. To explain the cauſe of theſe appearances is difficult: Yet a conjecture may be hazarded. If we think attentively on any ſubject, a number of ideas ariſe in our minds concerning it. Theſe ideas are of qualities and properties that may belong to it, or of the relations it may have to other objects, but of which we have no actual evidence. Yet, if we cannot negatively affirm that they do not belong to it; on the contrary, if they are agreeable

to

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to its nature and circumſtances, their ſpontaneous appearance in our minds, as connected with it, affords a preſumption that they really exiſt. Our belief, though not abſolutely confirmed, is yet ſwayed by a plauſible probability; and what ſtrengthens it ſtill the more, is a reflection on the narrowneſs of our powers, and the imperfection of our ſenſes. We reaſon from analogy, and think it impoſſible that an object ſhould be ſo completely known to us, as that we can pronounce with certainty that we are intimately acquainted with the whole of its ſtructure; and that qualities agreeing perfectly with its nature do not reſide in it, merely becauſe we do not diſcern them. As we are naturally prone to action, a ſtate of dubiety and ſuſpenſe is ever accompanied with uneaſineſs; we bear uncertainty with reluctance; we muſt be reſolved; and if we cannot prove a negative, even a ſlight probability will influence our belief. Therefore,

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fore, ſince ideas of correſponding qualities and relations do ariſe, and engage the attention of our judging faculty, we ſeldom heſitate, but aſcribe them immediately to the cauſe or object of our emotion. According to the vivacity of the idea, will be the energy of its impreſſion; and, according to the force of the impreſſion, will be our eagerneſs to decide. But the vivacity of the idea depends on the ſtrength of the exciting paſſion; therefore, proportioned to the vehemence of the paſſion will be our credulity and proneneſs to be convinced. It is alſo manifeſt, that, if any object is naturally difficult to be apprehended, and is ſo complex or delicate, as to elude the acuteneſs of our diſcernment, or the intenſeneſs of our inquiry, we ſhall be more liable to error in caſes of this nature, than in thoſe things that we perceive diſtinctly. Admiring the man of abilities, we cannot define with accuracy the preciſe boundaries of his



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genius; our imaginations give him energies additional to thoſe he exhibits; and it is agreeable to our opinion of his endowments, and conſonant to our preſent temper, to believe him more eminent than he really is. We are apt to judge in the ſame manner of the qualities of the heart. To the man who amazes us by ſome feat of perſonal bravery, we aſcribe every heroic virtue, though he may have never diſplayed them: And we pronounce liberal, generous, and diſintereſted, the man who ſurprizes us by ſome unexpected beneficence. On the ſame principles, thoſe who excite our indignation by their ungrateful or inhuman conduct are ſuppoſed to have trampled on every moral obligation; and we load them not only with the infamy of the crime they have committed, but with that of the crimes of which we believe them capable. The ſize and colour, ſo to expreſs myſelf, of the imaginary qualities in this manner attributed

to

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to any object, will correſpond exactly to the violence of the preſent emotion, or the obſtinacy of our opinion. If our ſenſe of virtue is exceedingly delicate, our indignation and abhorrence of vice will be of proportioned vehemence; and, according to their vehemence, will be the atrocity of the indefinite imaginary qualities aſcribed to the object of our abhorrence. If thoſe whoſe conduct we cenſure or lament were formerly eſteemed by us, ſurprize and ſorrow for our diſappointment, and indignation at a change ſo unexpected will augment the violence of our emotion, and ſo magnify their offences. Hence friendſhip, changed by neglect or ingratitude into indifference, grows into a hatred, of all others the moſt virulent and full of rancour. It is not wonderful, therefore, nor inconſiſtent with amiable and kind affections, that Hamlet, moved by an exquiſite ſenſe of virtue and propriety, ſhocked and aſtoniſhed at the ingratitude

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titude and guilt of Gertrude, whom he had revered and believed incapable of any blemish, should become apprehensive of the total degeneracy of her nature, and harbour suspicions concerning his father's death. To these suspicions, the suddenness of the event, the extraordinary and mysterious circumstances attending it, together with the character of the present king, give abundant colour. Hence, with a heart full of agony, prepared for the evidence, and willing to receive it, he exclaims,

> All is not well!
> I doubt some foul play.

Had Hamlet been more indifferent in his regard to propriety and moral obligation, he would have entertained less esteem for his father, less aversion at Claudius, and less displeasure at the hasty nuptials of Gertrude: He would have entertained no suspicion, nor have given way to resentment: Wholely void of anxiety, and

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and vexed by no uneaſy reflection, he would have enjoyed the happineſs of his exalted ſtation. The obſervation is painful: It infers, that the union between virtue and happineſs, ſo highly vaunted of by many moraliſts, is not ſo independent of external incidents as their theories would repreſent.

Shakeſpeare was abundantly capable of exhibiting the progreſs of ſuſpicion in the mind of Hamlet till it was ripened into belief. Yet ye proceeds in a different manner, and confirms his apprehenſions by a teſtimony, that, according to the prejudices of the times, could not eaſily be refuted. In this he acted judiciouſly: The difficulty was worthy of the interpoſition. Beſides it was an interpoſition perfectly agreeable to the religious opinions of an unenlightened people: and afforded an opportunity of enriching the drama with a very awful and pathetic incident. The ghoſt of Hamlet, even in nations where



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philoſophy flouriſhes, and in periods the leaſt addicted to ſuperſtition, will forever terrify and appall.

I am thy father's ſpirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And, for the day, confin'd to faſt in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the ſecrets of my priſon-houſe,
I could a tale unfold, whoſe lighteſt word
Would harrow up thy ſoul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like ſtars, ſtart from their ſpheres;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to ſtand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
But this eternal blazon muſt not be
To ears of fleſh and blood.—Lift, lift, oh lift!
If thou didſt ever thy dear father love, &c.

The awful horror excited by the foregoing paſſage, is accompliſhed by ſimplicity of expreſſion, and by the * uncertainty of the thing deſcribed. The deſcription is indirect; and, by exhibiting a picture of the effects, an actual view of the real

* Burke on the ſublime and beautiful.

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real object would neceſſarily produce in the ſpectator, it affects us more ſtrongly than by a poſitive enumeration of the moſt dreadful circumſtances. The imagination left to her own inventions, overwhelmed with obſcurity, travels far into the regions of terror, into the abyſſes of fiery and unfathomable darkneſs.

The condition of Hamlet's mind becomes ſtill more curious and intereſting. His ſuſpicions are confirmed, and beget reſentment. Conceiving deſigns of puniſhment, conſcious of very violent perturbation, perceiving himſelf already ſuſpected by the king, afraid leſt his aſpect, geſture, or demeanour ſhould betray him, and knowing that his projects muſt be conducted with ſecrecy, he reſolves to conceal himſelf under the diſguiſe of madneſs.

Swear, as before, never, ſo help you mercy!
How ſtrange or odd ſoe'er I bear myſelf,
As I, perchance, hereafter ſhall think meet
To put an antic diſpoſition on,
That you, at ſuch time ſeeing me, never ſhall,



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(With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-ſhake,
Or by pronouncing of ſome doubtful phraſe,
As, *well, well*—we know;—or, *we could, and if we would*;—
Or, *if we liſt to ſpeak*;—or, *there be, an if there might*;
Or ſuch ambiguous giving out) denote
That you know aught of me.

As it is of ſignal conſequence to him to have the rumour of his madneſs believed and propagated, he endeavours to render the counterfeit ſpecious. There is nothing that reconciles men more readily to believe in any extraordinary appearance than to have it accounted for. A reaſon of this kind is often more plauſible and impoſing than many forcible arguments, particularly, if the theory or hypotheſis be of our own invention. Accordingly, Hamlet, the more eaſily to deceive the king and his creatures, and to furniſh them with an explication of his uncommon deportment, practiſes his artifice on Ophelia.

*Oph.* Alas, my Lord, I have been ſo affrighted!
*Pol.* With what?



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*Oph.* My Lord, as I was ſewing in my cloſet,
Lord Hamlet—with his doublet all unbrac'd,
No hat upon his head, his ſtockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, &c.
And with a look ſo piteous in purport,
As if he had been looſed out of hell,
To ſpeak of horrors; he comes before me.
*Pol.* Mad for thy love?
*Oph.* My Lord, I do not know;
But, truly, I do fear it.
*Pol.* What ſaid he?
*Oph.* He took me by the wriſt, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arms;
And, with his other hand, thus o'er his brow,
He falls to ſuch peruſal of my face,
As he would draw it, &c.
*Pol.* This is the very ecſtaſy of love,
Whoſe violent property foredoes itſelf,
And leads the will to deſperate undertakings, &c.

There is no change in his attachment, unleſs in ſo far as other paſſions of a violent and unpleaſing character have aſſumed a temporary influence. His affection is permanent. Nor ought the pretended rudeneſs and ſeeming inconſiſtency of his behaviour to be at all attributed to incon-



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ſtancy or an intention to inſult. Engaged in a dangerous enterprize, agitated by impetuous emotions, deſirous of concealing them, and, for that reaſon, feigning his underſtanding diſordered; to confirm and publiſh this report, ſeemingly ſo hurtful to his reputation, he would act in direct oppoſition to his former conduct, and inconſiſtently with the genuine ſentiments and affections of his ſoul. He would ſeem frivolous when the occaſion required him to be ſedate: And, celebrated for the wiſdom and propriety of his conduct, he would aſſume appearances of impropriety. Full of honour and affection, he would ſeem inconſiſtent; Of elegant and agreeable manners, and poſſeſſing a complacent temper, he would put on the ſemblance of rudeneſs. To Ophelia he would ſhew diſlike and indifference; becauſe a change of this nature would be, of all others, the moſt remarkable, and becauſe his affection for her was paſſionate and

ſincere,

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ſincere. Of the ſincerity and ardour of his regard he gives undoubted evidence.

I lov'd Ophelia: forty thouſand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my ſum.

The tendency of indignation, and of furious and inflamed reſentment, is to inflict puniſhment on the offender. But, if reſentment is ingrafted on the moral faculty, and grows from it, its tenor and conduct will be different. In its firſt emotion it may breathe exceſſive and immediate vengeance: But ſentiments of juſtice and propriety interpoſing, will arreſt and ſuſpend its violence. An ingenuous mind, thus agitated by powerful and contending principles, exceedingly tortured and perplexed, will appear heſitating and undetermined. Thus, the vehemence of the vindictive paſſion will by delay, ſuffer abatement; by its own ardour it will be exhauſted; and our natural and habituated propenſities will reſume their influ-



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ence. Theſe continue in poſſeſſion of the heart till the mind repoſes and recovers vigour: And, if the conviction of injury ſtill remains, and if our reſentment ſeems juſtified by every amiable principle, by reaſon and the ſentiments of mankind, it will return with power and authority. Should any unintended incident awaken our ſenſibility, and diſpoſe us to a ſtate of mind favourable to the influences and operations of ardent and impetuous paſſions, our reſentment will reviſit us at that preciſe period, and turn in its favour, and avail itſelf of every other ſentiment and affection. The mind of Hamlet, weary and exhauſted by violent agitation, continues doubtful and undecided, till his ſenſibility, excited by a theatrical exhibition, reſtores to their authority his indignation and deſire of vengeance. Still, however, his moral principles, the ſupreme and governing powers of his conſtitution, conducting thoſe paſſions which they

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they ſeem to juſtify and excite, determine him again to examine his evidence, or endeavour, by additional circumſtances, to have it ſtrengthened.

Oh, what a rogue and peaſant ſlave am I!
Is it not monſtrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of paſſion,
Could force his ſoul ſo to its own conceit,
That, from her working, all his viſage wan'd;
Tears in his eyes, diſtraction in's aſpect,
A broken voice, and his whole function ſuiting,
With forms, to his conceit? and all for nothing?
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he ſhould weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for paſſion,
That I have? He would drown the ſtage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid ſpeech,
Make mad the guilty, and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed,
The very faculty of ears and eyes.
Yet, I ſay, nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whoſe property, and moſt dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made.—
I have heard,
That guilty creatures, ſitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the ſcene

Been

Been ſtruck ſo to the ſoul, that preſently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.
I'll have theſe players
Play ſomething like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll obſerve his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick; if he but blench,
I know my courſe. The ſpirit, that I have ſeen,
May be the devil; and the devil hath power
To aſſume a pleaſing ſhape; yea, and, perhaps,
Out of my weakneſs, and my melancholy,
(As he is very potent with ſuch ſpirits)
Abuſes me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this.

Reſolving to carry his project into execution, he conducts himſelf with his uſual candour and underſtanding. In an affair ſo difficult and ſo important, he does not confide in his own obſervations; but, in order to have his judgement rectified, in caſe of error, and to have his reſentment tempered, in caſe of violence, he imparts his intention to Horatio. Hamlet,

The expectancy and roſe of the fair ſtate,
The glaſs of faſhion, and the mould of form,

knew

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knew the ſanctity of friendſhip, its uſes, and its importance. His friend was not merely the partner of his amuſements, to be his aſſociate in his pleaſures, and to cheriſh his vanity by adulation: He was a friend to counſel and aſſiſt him in doubtful emergencies, to improve his heart, and correct his judgement. The qualities that diſtinguiſh Horatio, and render him worthy of the eſteem of Hamlet, are not affluence, nor pageantry, nor gay accompliſhments, nor vivacity, nor even wit, and uncommon genius, too often allied to an impetuous temper: He is diſtinguiſhed by that equanimity and independence of ſoul which ariſe from governed and corrected paſſions, from a ſound and diſcerning judgement.

Horatio, thou art e'en as juſt a man,
As e'er my converſation cop'd withal.
*Hor.* Oh my dear Lord—
*Ham.* Nay, do not think I flatter:
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue haſt, but thy good ſpirits,

To

To feed and cloath thee?
Doſt thou hear?
Since my dear ſoul was miſtreſs of her choice,
And could of men diſtinguiſh, her election
Hath ſeal'd thee for herſelf: for thou haſt been
As one, in ſuffering all, that ſuffers nothing;
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
Haſt ta'en with equal thanks *.
Give me that man,
That is not paſſion's ſlave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

Hamlet, by means of a dramatic exhibition, into which he had introduced the repreſentation of his father's murder, having aſſured himſelf of the guilt of Claudius by his emotions, has no longer any doubt concerning the propriety of his reſentment. If we are eagerly intereſted in any purſuit, whether of an end, or of a mean by which ſome end may be accompliſhed, our ſucceſs is ever attended with joy, even when the end we are purſuing is in itſelf a foundation of ſorrow. It frequently

* In quem manca ruit ſemper fortuna. Hor.

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quently happens too, if anger or reſentment have taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul, and have excited a deſire of vengeance; and if there is yet ſome uncertainty concerning the reality or groſſneſs of the injury we have received, that, till reflection operates, we are better pleaſed to have our ſuſpicions confirmed and our reſentment gratified, than to be convicted of an error, and ſo be delivered from a painful paſſion. Hamlet, pleaſed with the ſucceſs of his project, though its iſſue juſtified his reſentment, diſcovers gaiety, the natural expreſſion and ſign of joy.

Why, let the ſtrucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play:
For ſome muſt watch, while ſome muſt ſleep;
So runs the world away.

No ſcene was ever better imagined than that where Roſincrantz and Guildenſtern accoſt the prince. The creatures of Claudius, and, inſtigated by the queen, they are employed as ſpies upon Hamlet. He perceives

perceives it, and treats them with deſerved contempt: In ſuch a manner, however, as to conceal, as much as poſſible, the real ſtate of his mind. Yet he is teazed with their importunity: The tranſient gaiety of his humour, as it proceeded from a tranſient cauſe, is ſoon diſſipated, and is ſucceeded by reflections on his condition. His anger and reſentment are inflamed; and, indignant that the unworthy engines of a vile uſurper ſhould be thought capable of infnaring him, he confounds them, by ſhewing them he had penetrated their deſign, and overwhelms them with the ſupercilious dignity of his diſpleaſure.

*Ham.* Will you play upon this pipe?

*Guil.* My Lord, I cannot.

*Ham.* I pray you.

*Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

*Ham.* I do beſeech you.

*Guil.* I know no touch of it, my Lord.

*Ham.* 'Tis as eaſy as lying. Govern theſe ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will diſcourſe moſt eloquent muſic. Look you, theſe are the ſtops.



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*Guil.* But theſe cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the ſkill.

*Ham.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me? you would play upon me; you would ſeem to know my ſtops; you would pluck out the heart of my myſtery; you would ſound me from my loweſt note to the top of my compaſs: and there is much muſic, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it ſpeak. Why, do you think, that I am eaſier to be play'd on than a pipe?

The king, alarmed by the conſciouſneſs of his guilt, and rendered wary by the ſuſpicions naturally accompanying the dread of puniſhment, becomes exceedingly apprehenſive of the deſigns of Hamlet. Accordingly, he engages his mother to queſtion him, to ſift his ſoul, and detect him. Roſincrantz and Guildenſtern invite him to the conference. They are followed by another engine, who, with all the fawning and ſelf-ſufficiency of a courtier, grown grey in adulation and paltry cunning, endeavours, by aſſentation, to ſecure his confidence, and ſo elicit his ſecret purpoſe.

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poſe. Hamlet, fretted and exaſperated with a treatment ſo ill-ſuited to his ſentiments and underſtanding, receives him with contempt; he endeavours to impoſe on him the belief of his madneſs, but can hardly bridle his indignation.

*Pol.* My Lord, the Queen would ſpeak with you, and preſently.

*Ham.* Do you ſee yonder cloud, that's almoſt in ſhape of a camel?

*Pol.* By the maſs, and its like a camel, indeed, &c.

The perfidy and guilt of Claudius are now unqueſtioned. All the circumſtances of the murder are ſtamped indelibly on the imagination of Hamlet. Yet, though vehemently incenſed, the gentle and affectionate principles of his nature preſerve their influence, and to the unhappy Gertrude he will not be inhuman. His character, in this particular, is finely diſtinguiſhed from the Oreſtes either of Sophocles or of Euripides. His gentleneſs is far more natural, and renders him more amiable

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able and more eſteemed *. His violent reſentment againſt his uncle is contraſted in a very ſtriking manner, with the warnings of his moral faculty, and the tenderneſs of his affection.

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When church-yards yawn, and hell itſelf breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
And do ſuch bitter buſineſs as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother—
O heart, loſe not thy nature; let not ever
The ſoul of Nero enter this firm boſom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
I will ſpeak daggers to her, but uſe none.

The ſcene between the Queen and Hamlet has been highly celebrated, and I cannot

* In favour of Oreſtes, it may, however, be argued, that he was compelled to put Clytemneſtra to death by religious motives and the voice of an oracle: Hamlet, on the contrary, was deterred by a ſimilar authority from conceiving vengeance againſt the Queen, and was warned by the ghoſt,

Not to contrive againſt his mother aught,

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cannot fail, even though leſs advantageouſly repreſented than by a Garrick and a Pritchard, to agitate every audience. The time, 'the very witching time of night,' and the ſtate of Hamlet's mind, when 'he 'could drink hot blood, and do ſuch 'bitter buſineſs as the day would quake to 'look on,' prepare us for this important conference. The ſituation, that of a ſon endeavouring to reclaim a parent, is exceedingly intereſting. All the ſentiments and emotions are animated, and expreſſive of character. In the Queen we diſcern the confidence of a guilty mind, that, by the artifices of ſelf-deceit, has put to ſilence the upbraidings of conſcience. We diſcern in her the dexterity of thoſe perverted by evil habits, to abuſe their own underſtandings, and conceal from themſelves their blemiſhes. We alſo perceive in her the anguiſh and horror of a mind, appalled and confounded by the conſciouſneſs of its depravity, and its eager ſollici-

tude

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tude to be rescued, by any means, from the persecuting and painful feeling. Hamlet, full of affection, studies to secure her tranquility: And, guided by moral principles, he endeavours to establish it on the foundation of virtue. Animated by every generous and tender sentiment, and convinced of the superior excellence and dignity of an unblemished conduct, he cannot bear that those who are dear to him should be depraved. It is to gratify this amiable temper, that he labours to renew, in the misguided Gertrude, a sense of honour and of merit, to turn her attention, without subterfuge or disguise, on her own behaviour; and so restore her to her former fame. He administers his medicine with reluctance: It is harsh, but the disease is desperate. It is not suitable to the agitated state of his mind, to enter sedately into a formal and argumentative discussion of the impiety and immorality of her conduct: He mentions these in a



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ſummary manner; and, following the impulſe of his own mind, he ſpeaks the language of ſtrong emotion, addreſſes her feelings, and endeavours to convey into her heart ſome portion of the indignation with which he is himſelf inflamed.

Look here upon this picture, and on this;
The counterfeit preſentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was ſeated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himſelf;
An eye, like Mars, to threaten or command;
A ſtation, like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kiſſing hill;
A combination, and a form, indeed,
Where every god did ſeem to ſet his ſeal,
To give the world aſſurance of a man:
This *was* your huſband.—Look you now, what follows;
Here *is* your huſband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blaſting his wholeſome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?

The contraſt in theſe lines co-operating with other cauſes, has a very ſtriking effect. The tranſition from admiration to abhorrence, in a remarkable degree, heightens

heightens the latter. Hamlet dwells minutely on every circumſtance of his father's character: But, paſſing from that to the picture of Claudius, his perturbation is viſibly augmented; his indignation and abhorrence are almoſt too exceſſive for utterance: And the difference between the two characters appearing to him ſo manifeſt as to render a particular illuſtration needleſs, he reflects with ſeverity on that woeful perverſion of mind that blunted the feelings and perceptions of Gertrude.

> You cannot call it, love; for, at your age,
> The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
> And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
> Would ſtep from this to this?

He convinces her of her guilt: But ſo fallacious and ſo impoſing are evil habits, that, in ſpite of her recent conviction, ſhe would yield herſelf to their ſuggeſtions: By ſuppoſing her ſon diſordered, ſhe would leſſen the authority of his argu-



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ment, and ſo relapſe. Hamlet, perceiving the workings of her invention, and anxious for her recovery, touches the diſtempered part of her ſoul with a delicate and ſkilful hand: He infuſes ſuch golden inſtruction, and diſcovers ſuch penetration and knowledge of human nature, as would have dignified a philoſopher. He tempers the ſeverity of his admonition with mildneſs; and aſſures her in a pathetic manner, that affection, and zeal for her welfare, are his only motives.

Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your ſoul,
That not your treſpaſs, but my madneſs, ſpeaks.
It will but ſkin, and film the ulcerous place;
Whilſt rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unſeen. Confeſs yourſelf to heaven;
Repent what's paſt; avoid what is to come;
And do not ſpread the compoſt on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For, in the fatneſs of theſe purſy times,
Virtue itſelf of vice muſt pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo, for leave to do him good.
Q. Oh Hamlet! thou haſt cleft my heart in twain.



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*Ham.* O, throw away the worſer part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Aſſume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monſter cuſtom, who all ſenſe doth eat
Of habits evil, is angel yet in this;
That to the uſe of actions fair and good
He likewiſe gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night;
And that ſhall lend a kind of eaſineſs
To the next abſtinence: the next, more eaſy;
For uſe can almoſt change the ſtamp of nature,
And maſter the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency.

As the contrition of Gertrude, and her conſequent good intentions were the effect of a ſudden emotion, its violence no ſooner abates, than her former habits reſume their influence. She appears irreſolute: And Hamlet, full of aſtoniſhment and indignation, expreſſes himſelf with keenneſs. He inveighs with acrimony againſt his uncle; And the Queen, vanquiſhed by his invective, aſſures him of her repentance.

All the buſineſs of the tragedy, in re-



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gard to the diſplay of character, is here concluded. Hamlet, having detected the perfidy and inhumanity of his uncle, and having reſtored the Queen to a ſenſe of her depravity, ought immediately to have triumphed in the utter ruin of his enemies, or to have fallen a victim to their deceit. The ſucceeding circumſtances of the play are unneceſſary; they are not eſſential to the cataſtrophe: And, excepting the madneſs of Ophelia, and the ſcene of the grave-diggers, they exhibit nothing new in the characters. On the contrary, the delay cools our impatience; it diminiſhes our ſollicitude for the fate of Hamlet, and almoſt leſſens him in our eſteem. Let him periſh immediately, ſince the poet dooms him to periſh: Yet poetical juſtice would have decided otherwiſe.

On reviewing this analyſis, a ſenſe of virtue, if I may uſe the language of an eminent philoſopher, without profeſſing myſelf of his ſect, ſeems to be the ruling prin-

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principle. In other men, it may appear with the enſigns of high authority: In Hamlet, it poſſeſſes abſolute power. United with amiable affections, with every graceful accompliſhment, and every agreeable quality, it embelliſhes and exalts them. It rivets his attachment to his friends, when he finds them deſerving; It is a ſource of ſorrow, if they appear corrupted. It even ſharpens his penetration; and, if unexpectedly he diſcerns turpitude or impropriety in any character, it inclines him to think more deeply of their tranſgreſſion, than if his ſentiments were leſs refined. It thus induces him to ſcrutinize their conduct, and may lead him to the diſcovery of more enormous guilt. As it excites uncommon pain and abhorrence on the appearance of perfidious and inhuman actions, it provokes and ſtimulates his reſentment: Yet, attentive to juſtice, and concerned in the intereſts of human nature, it governs the impetuoſity

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of that unruly paſſion. It diſpoſes him to be cautious in admitting evidence to the prejudice of another: It renders him diſtruſtful of his own judgment, during the ardour and the reign of paſſion; and directs him in the choice of aſſociates, on whoſe fidelity and judgment he may depend. If ſoftened by a beneficent and gentle temper, he heſitates in the execution of any lawful enterprize, it reproves him. And if there is any hope of reſtoring thoſe that are fallen, and of renewing in them habits of virtue and of ſelf-command, it renders him aſſiduous in his endeavours to ſerve them. Men of other diſpoſitions would think of gratifying their friends by contributing to their affluence, to their amuſement, or external honour: But, the acquiſitions that Hamlet values, and the happineſs he would confer, are a conſcience void of offence, the peace and the honour of virtue. Yet, with all this purity of moral ſentiment, with eminent abilities,

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abilities, exceedingly cultivated and improved, with manners the moſt elegant and becoming, with the utmoſt rectitude of intention, and the moſt active zeal in the exerciſe of every duty, he is hated, perſecuted, and deſtroyed.

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## SECTION III.

### ON THE

# CHARACTER

### OF THE

# MELANCHOLY JAQUES.

JAQUES, in AS-YOU-LIKE-IT, is exhibited to us in extraordinary circumſtances, and in a ſituation very romantic.

*Lord.* To-day my Lord of Amiens, and myſelf,
Did ſteal behind him, as he lay along
Under an oak, whoſe antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:
To the which place a poor ſequeſter'd ſtag,

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That from the hunters' aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languiſh; and, indeed, my Lord,
The wretched animal heav'd forth ſuch groans
That their diſcharge did ſtretch his leathern coat
Almoſt to burſting; and the big round tears,
Cours'd one another down his innocent noſe
In piteous chace: and thus the hairy fool,
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,
Stood on the extremeſt verge of the ſwift brook,
Augmenting it with tears.

*Duke.* But what ſaid Jaques?
Did he not moraliſe this ſpectacle?

*Lord.* O yes, into a thouſand ſimilies.
Firſt, for his weeping in the needleſs ſtream;
*Poor deer*, quoth he, *thou mak'ſt a teſtament*
*As worldlings do, giving thy ſum of more,*
*To that which had too much.* Then, being alone,
Left and abandoned of his velvet friends;
*'Tis right*, quoth he; *thus miſery doth part*
*The flux of company.* Anon, a careleſs herd,
Full of the paſture, jumps along by him,
And never ſtays to greet him. *Ay*, quoth Jaques,
*Sweep on, you fat and greaſy citizens;*
*'Tis juſt the faſhion: wherefore do you look*
*Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?*

The moſt ſtriking character in the mind of Jacques, according to this deſcription, is

is extreme ſenſibility. He diſcovers a heart ſtrongly diſpoſed to compaſſion, and ſuſceptible of the moſt tender impreſſions of friendſhip: for he who can ſo feelingly deplore the abſence of kindneſs and humanity, muſt be capable of reliſhing the delight annexed to their exerciſe. But ſenſibility is the ſoil where nature has planted ſocial and ſweet affections: By ſenſibility they are cheriſhed, and grow mature. Social diſpoſitions produce all thoſe amiable and endearing connections that alleviate the ſorrows of human life, adorn our nature, and render us happy. Now Jaques, avoiding ſociety, and burying himſelf in the lonely foreſt, ſeems to act inconſiſtently with his conſtitution. He poſſeſſes ſenſibility; ſenſibility begets affection; and affection begets the love of ſociety. But Jaques is unſocial. Can theſe inconſiſtent qualities be reconciled? Or has Shakeſpeare exhibited a character of which the parts are incongruous, and

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diſcordant? In other words, how happens it that a temper diſpoſed to beneficence, and addicted to ſocial enjoyment, becomes ſolitary and morooſe? Changes of this kind are not unfrequent: And, if reſearches into the origin or cauſe of a diſtemper can direct us in the diſcovery of an antidote or of a remedy, our preſent inquiry is of importance. Perhaps, the exceſs and luxuriancy of benevolent diſpoſitions blighted by unkindneſs or ingratitude, is the cauſe that, inſtead of yielding us fruits of complacency and friendſhip, they ſhed bitter drops of miſanthropy.

Averſion from ſociety proceeds from diſlike to mankind, and from an opinion of the inefficacy, and uncertainty of external pleaſure. Let us conſider each of theſe apart: Let us trace the progreſs by which they eſtabliſhed themſelves in the mind of Jaques, and gave his temper an unnatural colour.

I. The



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I. The gratification of our ſocial affections ſuppoſes friendſhip and eſteem for others; and theſe diſpoſitions ſuppoſe in their object virtues of a correſponding character: For every one values his own opinion, and fancies the perſon to whom he teſtifies eſteem actually deſerves it. If beneficent affections, ardent and undiſciplined, predominate in our conſtitution, and govern our opinions, we enter into life ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed in favour of mankind, and endeavour, by a generous and diſintereſted conduct, to render ourſelves worthy of their regard. That ſpirit of diffuſive goodneſs, which eloquent and benign philoſophy recommends, but without ſucceſs, to men engaged in the commerce of the world, operates uncontrouled. The heart throbs with aſtoniſhment and indignation at every act of injuſtice, and our bowels yearn to relieve the afflicted. Our beneficence is unlimited; We are free from ſuſpicion: Our friendſhips

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ſhips are eagerly adopted; they are ardent and ſincere. This conduct may, for a time, be flattered: Our fond imaginations may heighten every trivial act of complacency into a teſtimony of unfeigned eſteem. And thus, deceived by deluſive appearances, we become ſtill more credulous and profuſe. But the fairy viſion will ſoon evaniſh: And the novice who vainly truſted to the benevolence of mankind, will ſuddenly find himſelf alone and deſolate, in the midſt of a ſelfiſh and deceitful world: Like an enchanted traveller, who imagines he is journeying through a region of delight, till he drinks of ſome bitter fountain, and inſtantly, inſtead of flowery fields and meadows, he finds himſelf deſtitute and forlorn, amid the horrors of a dreary deſart.

It ſeems an invariable law in the conduct of our paſſions, that, independent of the object they purſue, they ſhould yield us pleaſure, merely by their exerciſe and



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operation. It is known by experience, that the pain of diſappointed paſſion is not ſolely occaſioned by our being deprived of ſome deſirable object, but by having the current of the mind oppoſed; ſo that the excited paſſion recoils exaſperated upon the heart. The anguiſh of this ſituation is ſtrongly expreſſed by Seneca, "In an-" guſto incluſae cupiditates ſine exitu ſe-" ipſas ſtrangulant." There can be no doubt, that anger, malice, and all the malevolent and irregular paſſions, independent of their fatal conſequences, leave the mind in a ſtate of anxiety and diſorder. One ſhould therefore imagine, that ſatisfaction would ariſe from their being repulſed, and that men would felicitate themſelves for a recovery ſo eſſential to their repoſe. Reaſon, and ſelf-love may conſider it in this view, and our ſenſe of propriety may hinder us from complaining; but the heart is ſecretly dejected, and the unbidden ſigh betrays us. The gloom, however,

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however, is ſoon diſperſed. Yet it proves that the mind ſuffers more when its operations are ſuddenly ſuſpended, than when it languiſhes in a ſtate of liſtleſs inactivity. Thus, our benevolent affections, conſidered merely as principles of action, partaking of the ſame common nature with other paſſions and affections, if their tenor is interrupted, produce anxiety.

But the peculiar character of theſe diſpoſitions renders the anguiſh occaſioned by their ſuſpenſion more exquiſitely painful. They are of a ſoft exhilarating nature, they elevate and enlarge our conceptions, they refine our feelings, they quicken our ſenſibility, and ſtimulate our love of pleaſure: They diffuſe joy and ſerenity through the ſoul, and, by a delightful illuſion, give every thing around us a ſmiling and enlivened aſpect. To a mild and benevolent temper, even inanimate objects, the beauties of nature, the ſkies, the groves, and the fountains, com-



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municate unuſual pleaſure, and of a quality too refined to be reliſhed by vulgar and malignant ſpirits. But, proportioned to the delight annexed to the exerciſe of ſocial affections, is the pain ariſing from their ſuſpenſion.

Social affections confer happineſs, not only by the feelings they excite in us, but by procuring us the friendſhip and eſteem of others. Adequate returns of tenderneſs are eſſential to their exiſtence. By diſdain and indifference they languiſh; they render us anxious, and deſponding.

Other advantages leſs immediate, and which concern our fortune and external circumſtances, often depend on the benevolence and ſincerity of our friends. For, though it is contrary to the rules of prudence, and the maxims of the world, to repoſe ſuch entire confidence in the virtue of mankind as to render it poſſible for them to injure or ruin us; yet there are caſes of ſtrong neceſſity that mock reſerve; and there

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there are inſtances of men ſo unſuſpecting, or ſo improvident, as to allow themſelves, by exceſſive facility, to be over-reached and undone.

The diſappointments of ſocial affection may give us uneaſineſs of another kind: They may offend againſt the good opinion we are apt to entertain of ourſelves; a principle rivetted in our conſtitution, uſeful and neceſſary in itſelf, but, by diſpoſing us to overweening conceit, liable to be perverted.

Pain and uneaſineſs give riſe to ſorrow; and ſorrow varies according to the ſources from which it flows: It is either gentle and languiſhing, or imbittered with rancour and animoſity.

When the uneaſineſs ariſes from the ſudden and untoward ſuſpenſion of our emotions, or from the diſappointment of ſome ardent affection, it is of a mild and dejected nature. It may diſpoſe us to remonſtrate, but not to inveigh. It is mo-



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deſt and unaſſuming. It even induces us to think indifferently of ourſelves, and, by laying the blame on our own unworthineſs, to excuſe the inattention or diſdain of others.

Perhaps I was void of all thought,
Perhaps it was plain to foreſee,
That a nymph ſo complete would be ſought
By a ſwain more engaging than me.

Sorrow of this tender complexion, leading us to complain, but not to accuſe, and finding remonſtrances and complaint ineffectual, retires from ſociety, and ponders its woe in ſecret.

Ye woods, ſpread your branches apace,
To your deepeſt receſſes I fly;
I would hide with the beaſts of the chace,
I would vaniſh from every eye.

The ſtate of mind produced by theſe emotions, is exhibited to us with uncommon tenderneſs and ſimplicity by Orlando. "If I'm foiled, there is but one ſhamed "that was never gracious: If killed, but "one

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" one dead that is willing to be ſo: I ſhall " do my friends no wrong, for I have " none to lament: The world no injury, " for in it I have nothing: Only in the " world I fill up a place which may be " better ſupplied when I have made it " empty."

But, when ambition, avarice, or vanity are concerned, our ſorrow is acrimonious, and mixed with anger. If, by truſting to the integrity and beneficence of others, our fortune be diminiſhed, or not augmented as we expected; or if we are not advanced and honoured agreeably to our deſires, and the idea we had formed of our own deſert, we conceive ourſelves injured. Injury provokes reſentment, and reſentment moves us to retaliate. Accordingly, we retaliate: We inveigh againſt mankind: We accuſe them of envy, perfidy, and injuſtice. We fancy ourſelves the apoſtles or champions of virtue, and go forth to combat and confound her op-



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ponents. The celebrated Swift, poſſeſſing uncommon abilities, and actuated by ambition, flattered his imagination with hopes of preferment and diſtinguiſhed honour; was diſappointed, and wrote ſatires on human nature. Many who declaim with ſolemn ſorrow and prolixity againſt the depravity and degeneracy of mankind, and overcharge the picture of human frailty with ſhades of the gloomieſt tincture, imagine themſelves the elected heroes of true religion, while they are merely indulging a ſplenetic humour.

On comparing the ſorrow excited by repulſed and languiſhing affection, with that ariſing from the diſappointment of ſelfiſh appetites, melancholy appears to be the temper produced by the one, miſanthropy by the other. Both render us unſocial; but melancholy diſpoſes us to complain, miſanthropy to inveigh. The one remonſtrates and retires: The other abuſes and retires, and ſtill abuſes. The one

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one is softened with regret: The other virulent and fierce with rancour. Melancholy is amiable and benevolent, and wishes mankind would reform: Misanthropy is malignant, and breathes revenge. The one is an object of compassion; the other of pity.

Though melancholy rules the mind of Jaques, he partakes of the leaven of human nature, and, moved by a sense of injury and disappointment,

> Most invectively he pierceth through
> The body of the country, city, court.

Instigated by sentiments of self-respect, if not of pride, he treats the condition of humanity, and the pursuits of mankind, as insignificant and uncertain. His invectives, therefore, are mingled with contempt, and expressed with humour. At the same time, he shows evident symptoms of a benevolent nature: He is interested in the improvement of mankind, and inveighs,

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veighs, not entirely to indulge reſentment, but with a deſire to correct their depravity.

*Duke.* What! you look merrily!

*Jaq.* A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the foreſt,
A motley fool! A miſerable world!
As I do live by food, I met a fool;
Who laid him down and baſk'd him in the ſun,
And rail'd on lady Fortune in good terms,
In good set terms,—and yet a motley fool.
*Good morrow, fool,* quoth I:—*No, ſir,* quoth he.
*Call me not fool, till Heaven hath ſent me fortune:*
And then he drew a dial from his poke;
And looking on it with lack-luſtre eye,
Says, very wiſely, *It is ten a'clock;*
*Thus may we ſee,* quoth he, *how the world wags.*
*'Tis but an hour ago ſince it was nine;*
*And after one hour more, 'twill be eleven;*
*And ſo, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,*
*And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot,*
*And thereby hangs a tale.*
O noble fool!
A worthy fool!—Motley's the only wear.

*Duke.* What fool is this?

*Jaq.* O worthy fool!—One that hath been a courtier;
And ſays, if ladies be but young, and fair,
They have the gift to know it; and in his brain,



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Which is as dry as the remainder biſket
After a voyage, he hath ſtrange places cramm'd
With obſervation, the which he vents
In mangled forms:—O that I were a fool!
I am ambitious for a motley coat.
*Duke.* Thou ſhalt have one.
*Jaq.* It is my only ſuit;
Provided, that you weed your better judgments
Of all opinion, that grows rank in them,
That I am wiſe. I muſt have liberty
Withal; as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I pleaſe; for ſo fools have:
And they that are moſt galled with my folly,
They moſt muſt laugh: And why, ſir, muſt they ſo?
The *why* is plain as way to pariſh church, &c.
Inveſt me in my motley; give me leave
To ſpeak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanſe the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

This mixture of melancholy and miſanthropy in the character of Jaques is more agreeable to human nature than the repreſentation of either of the extremes; for a complete miſanthrope is as uncommon an object as a man who ſuffers injury without reſentment. Mankind hold a

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ſort of middle rank, and are in general too good for the one, and too bad for the other. As benevolence and ſenſibility are manifeſt in the temper of Jaques, we are not offended with his ſeverity. By the oddity of his manner, by the keenneſs of his remarks, and ſhrewdneſs of his obſervations, while we are inſtructed, we are alſo amuſed. He is preciſely what he himſelf tells us, "often wrapped in a moſt "humourous ſadneſs." His ſadneſs, of a mild and gentle nature, recommends him to our regard; his humour amuſes.

A picture of this kind ſhews the fertility of Shakeſpeare's genius, his knowledge of human nature, and the accuracy of his pencil, much more than if he had repreſented in ſtriking colours either of the component parts. By running them into one another, and by delineating their ſhades where they are gradually and almoſt imperceptibly blended together, the extent and delicacy of his conceptions, and his amazing

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amazing powers of execution are fully evident. Violent and impetuous paſſions are obvious, their colours are vivid, their features ſtrongly marked, they may eaſily be diſcerned and eaſily copied. But the ſenſibility of the ſoul flows out in a variety of emotions and feelings, whoſe impulſes are leſs apparent, and whoſe progreſs and operation may eſcape the notice of ſuperficial obſervers; but whoſe influence in governing the conduct, and faſhioning the tempers of mankind, is more extenſive than we are apt to imagine. Affections and paſſions which gain an aſcendant in the ſoul by ſilent and unobſerved approaches, which, inſtead of impelling, ſeduce, and are not perceptible in the geſtures or countenance till they have eſtabliſhed a peculiar habit or temper, are repreſented to us by thoſe only whom nature has diſtinguiſhed; and whom, by rendering them exquiſitely ſuſceptible of every feeling, ſhe has rendered ſupremely happy,

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happy, or miſerable beyond the common lot of humanity. To men of this character, endowed with lively imaginations, and a talent of eaſy expreſſion, the moſt delicate emotions and affections of the ſoul ſubmit themſelves, ſuffering them to copy their true appearance, and exhibit them for the profit and pleaſure of mankind: Like thoſe aerial agents, the ſylphs, fairies, and other divinities of the poets, that preſide over the ſeaſons, and regulate the progreſs of vegetation, but which can only be rendered viſible by the ſpells and authority of a ſkilful magician.

II. That Jaques, on account of diſappointments in friendſhip, ſhould become reſerved and cenſorious, is conſiſtent with human nature: But is it natural that he ſhould abjure pleaſure, and conſider the world and every enjoyment of ſenſe as frivolous and inexpedient? Ought he not rather to have recurred to them for conſolation,

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ſolation, and to have ſought in them wherewithal to have relieved and ſolaced him? On the contrary, he expatiates with ſatisfaction on the inſufficiency of human happineſs, and on the inſignificance of our purſuits.

All the world 's a ſtage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being ſeven ages. At firſt, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurſe's arms:
And then, the whining ſchool-boy with his ſatchel,
And ſhining morning-face, creeping like ſnail
Unwillingly to ſchool:—And then, the lover;
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
Made to his miſtreſs' eye-brow:—Then, a ſoldier;
Full of ſtrange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, ſudden and quick in quarrel;
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth:—And then, the juſtice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
With eyes ſevere, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wiſe ſaws and modern inſtances,
And ſo he plays his part:—The ſixth age ſhifts
Into the lean and ſlipper'd pantaloon;
With ſpectacles on noſe, and pouch on ſide;

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His youthful hoſe well ſav'd, a world too wide
For his ſhrunk ſhank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childiſh treble, pipes
And whiſtles in his ſound:—Laſt ſcene of all,
That ends this ſtrange eventful hiſtory,
Is ſecond childiſhneſs, and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, ſans eyes, ſans taſte, ſans every thing.

That the heart, ſorrowful and dejected by the repulſe of an ardent paſſion, is averſe from pleaſure of every kind, has been often obſerved. The mind, in a gay and healthful ſtate, receives hope and enjoyment from every object around us. The ſame objects, if we languiſh and deſpond, are regarded with diſguſt or indifference. "What path of life would you purſue?" ſaid Poſeidippus, moroſe and out of humour with his condition: "In public you "are perplexed with buſineſs and contention: At home, you are tired with "cares: In the country, you are fatigued "with labour? At ſea, you are expoſed to "danger: In a foreign land, if rich, you "are fearful; if poor, neglected: Have "you

" you a wife? expect ſorrow: Unmar-
" ried? your life is irkſome: Children
" will make you anxious: Childleſs, your
" life is lonely: Youth is fooliſh: And
" grey-hairs feeble. Upon the whole,
" the wiſe man would chuſe either not
" to have exiſted, or to have died the
" moment of his birth." " Chuſe any path
" of life," replies the chearful Metrodo-
rus: " In the forum are profits and wiſe
" debates: At home, relaxation: In the
" country, the bounty of nature: The
" ſea-faring life is gainful: In a foreign
" land, if wealthy, you are reſpected;
" if poor, nobody knows it: Are you
" married? your houſe is chearful? Un-
" married? you live without care: Chil-
" dren afford delight: Childleſs, you have
" no ſorrow: Youth is vigorous: And
" old-age venerable. The wiſe man,
" therefore, would not chuſe but to have
" exiſted." Moroſe and ſplenetic mo-
ments are tranſient; the ſoul recovers



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from them as from a lethargy, exerts her activity, and purſues enjoyment: But, in the temper of Jaques, moroſeneſs is become habitual: He abandons the world, he contemns its pleaſures, and buries himſelf in a cloiſter. The cauſe of this exceſſive ſeverity requires a particular explanation.

Among the various deſires and propenſities implanted by nature in the conſtitution of every individual, ſome one paſſion, either by original and ſuperior vigour, or by reiterated indulgence, gains an aſcendant in the ſoul, and ſubdues every oppoſing principle; it unites with deſires and appetites that are not of an oppoſite tendency, it bends them to its pleaſure, and in their gratifications purſues its own. The man whoſe governing paſſion is pride, may alſo be ſocial and beneficent, he may love his friends, and rejoice in their good fortune; but, even in their company, the deſire of impreſſing them with an idea of



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his own importance, forever obtruding itself, produces diſguſt and averſion. The ruling paſſion, blended with others, augments their vehemence, and conſequently enhances their pleaſure: For the pleaſure ariſing from the gratification of any paſſion, is proportioned to its force. Moreover, the ſenſations ariſing from the indulgence of the governing principle will neceſſarily be combined with thoſe ariſing from the gratification of other appetites and deſires; ſo intimately combined, that their union is not eaſily diſcerned, but by thoſe who are accuſtomed to reflect on their feelings: Yet, by their union, they affect the mind with a ſtronger impulſe than if they were ſeparately excited. Suppoſe the ruling paſſion thwarted: It ceaſes to operate with ſucceſs: The force it communicated to other paſſions is withdrawn; conſequently, their vehemence ſuffers abatement; and, conſequently, the pleaſure they yield is leſſened. By the



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diſcomfiture and diſappointment of the governing principle, the pleaſure ariſing from its gratification is no longer united with that ariſing from other active but ſubordinate principles: And thus, the pleaſure reſulting from ſubordinate principles, by the failure and abſence of the adventitious pleaſure with which it was formerly accompanied, is ſenſibly diminiſhed. It is, therefore, manifeſt, that, if ſocial and beneficent affections, by gaining a ſuperiority in the conſtitution, have heightened every other enjoyment, and if their exerciſe is ſuſpended by diſappointment, all the pleaſures of ſenſe or of ambition that formerly contributed to our felicity, though in themſelves they are ſtill the ſame; yet, being reft of their better part, of the ſpirit that enlivened them, they ſtrike the mind ſo feebly, as only to awaken its attention to the loſs it hath ſuſtained; and, inſtead of affording comfort, they aggravate our misfortune.



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We eſtimate their importance, not as they really are, but as they affect us in our preſent ſtate; we undervalue and deſpiſe them.

Qu'en ſes plus beaux habits l'Aurore au teint vermeil,
Annonce à l'univers le retour du ſoleil,
Et, que devant ſon char, ſes legeres ſuivantes
Ouvrent de l'orient les portes eclatantes;
Depuis que ma bergere a quitté ces beaux lieux,
Le ciel n'a plus ni jour, ni clarté pour mes yeux.

SEGRAIS.

We may alſo obſerve, that ſocial and beneficent affections are in their own nature gay and exhilarating; and that, by extending their influence to other paſſions that are not oppoſed to them, they accelerate their motions and augment their vivacity. They animate, and even inflame the inferior appetites; and where reaſon, and other ſerious principles are not inveſted with ſupreme authority, they expoſe us to the anarchy of unlawful paſ-



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ſions. There are many inſtances of men betrayed into habits of profligacy and diſſipation, by the influence of their ſocial affections. Theſe men, diſappointed and chagreened with the world, and conſequently, with every pleaſure, to whoſe energy the love of ſociety contributed, conſider the enjoyments ariſing from inferior appetites, not as they really are, when governed and guided by reaſon, but immoderate and pernicious, agreeably to their own experience. Reformed profligates are in general the moſt eloquent teachers of abſtinency and ſelf-denial. Polemo, converted by Xenocrates from a courſe of wild extravagance, became eminent in the ſchool of Plato. The wiſdom of Solomon was, in like manner, the child of folly. And the melancholy Jaques would not have moralized ſo profoundly, had he not been, as we are told in the play, a diſſipated and ſenſual libertine.

To

To the foregoing obſervations, and to the conſiſtency of Jaques's character, one thing may be objected: He is fond of muſic. But ſurely muſic is an enjoyment of ſenſe; it affords pleaſure; it is admitted to every joyous ſcene, and augments their gaiety. How can this be explained?

Though action ſeems eſſential to our happineſs, the mind never exerts itſelf, unleſs it be actuated by ſome paſſion or deſire. Thinking appears to be neceſſary to its exiſtence; for ſurely that quality is neceſſary, without which the object cannot be conceived. But the exiſtence of thinking depends upon thoughts or ideas: And, conſequently, whether the mind is active or not, ideas are preſent to the thinking faculty. The motions and laws obſerved by our thoughts in the impreſſions they make on us, vary according as the ſoul may be influenced by various paſſions. At one time, they move with incredible celerity; they ſeem to ruſh upon us in the



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wildeſt diſorder; and thoſe of the moſt oppoſite character and complexion unite in the ſame aſſemblage. At other times, they are ſlow, regular, and uniform. Now, it is obvious, that their rapidity muſt be occaſioned by the eagerneſs of an impelling paſſion, and that their wild extravagance proceeds from the energies of various paſſions operating at once or alternately. Paſſions, appetites, and deſires are the principles of action, and govern the motions of our thoughts: Yet they are themſelves dependent: They depend on our preſent humour, or ſtate of mind, and on our temporary capacity of receiving pleaſure or pain. It is always to obtain ſome enjoyment, or to avoid ſome pain or uneaſineſs, that we indulge the violence of deſire, and enter eagerly into the hurry of thoughts and of action. But, if we are languid and deſponding, if melancholy diffuſes itſelf through the ſoul, we no longer cheriſh the gay illuſions of hope; no

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no pleaſure ſeems worthy of our attention; we reject conſolation, and brood over the images of our diſtreſs. In this ſtate of mind, we are animated by no vigorous or lively paſſion; our thoughts are quickened by no violent impulſe; They reſemble one another: We frequently return to the ſame images: Our tone of mind continues the ſame, unleſs a deſire or wiſh intervenes, that our condition were ſome how different; and as this ſuggeſts to us a ſtate of circumſtances and events very different from what we ſuffer, our affliction is aggravated by the contraſt, and we ſink into deeper ſorrow. Preciſely agreeable to this deſcription, is the character of melancholy muſic. The ſounds, that is, the ideas it conveys to the mind, move ſlowly; they partake of little variety, or, if they are conſiderably varied, it is by a contraſt that heightens the expreſſion. The idea of a ſound has certainly no reſemblance to that of a misfortune: Yet,

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Yet, as they may affect us in a ſimilar manner, it is probable they have ſome common qualities: And thoſe we have endeavoured to ſhow, conſiſt in the manner by which they enter the mind. Slow ſounds, gentle zephyrs and murmuring ſtreams, are agreeable to the afflicted lover. And the dreary whiſtling of the midnight wind through the crevices of a darkſome cloyſter, cheriſheth the melancholy of the trembling nun, and diſpoſes her to a gloomy and auſtere devotion. Thus, the deſire of Jaques ſeems perfectly ſuited to his character; for the muſic he requires is agreeable to his preſent temper.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not ſo unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not ſo keen,
Becauſe thou art not ſeen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter ſky,
Thou doſt not bite ſo nigh



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As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy ſting is not ſo ſharp
As friend remember'd not.

Thus we have endeavoured to illuſtrate how ſocial diſpoſitions, by being exceſſive, and by ſuffering painful repulſe, may render us unſocial and moroſe; how

Goodneſs wounds itſelf,
And ſweet affection proves the ſpring of woe.

If theſe reaſonings have any foundation in nature, they lead us to ſome concluſions that deſerve attention. To judge concerning the conduct of others, and to indulge obſervations on the inſtability of human enjoyments, may aſſiſt us in the diſcipline of our own minds, and in correcting our pride and exceſſive appetites. But to allow reflections of this kind to become habitual, and to preſide in our ſouls, is to counteract the good intentions of nature. In order, therefore, to anticipate a diſpoſition ſo very painful to ourſelves, and ſo diſ-

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diſagreeable to others, we ought to learn, before we engage in the commerce of the world, what we may expect from ſociety in general, and from every individual †. But if, previous to experience, we are unable to form juſt judgments of ourſelves and others, we muſt beware of deſpondency, and of opinions injurious to human nature. Let us ever remember, that all men have peculiar intereſts to purſue; that every man ought to exert himſelf vigorouſly in his own employment; and that, if we are uſeful and blameleſs, we ſhall have the favour of our fellow-citizens. Let us love mankind; but let our affections be duly chaſtened. Be independent, if poſſible; but not a Stoic.

† Bruyere.

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## SECT. IV.

### ON THE

## CHARACTER OF IMOGEN.

CROUDED theatres have applauded IMOGEN. There is a pleasing ſoftneſs and delicacy in this agreeable character, that render it peculiarly intereſting. Love is the ruling paſſion; but it is love ratified by wedlock, gentle, conſtant, and refined.

The ſtrength and peculiar features of a ruling paſſion, and the power of other principles to influence its motions and moderate

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derate its impetuosity, are principally manifest, when it is rendered violent by fear, hope, grief, and other emotions of a like nature, excited by the concurrence of external circumstances. When love is the governing passion, these concomitant and secondary emotions are called forth by separation, the apprehension of inconstancy, and the absolute belief of disaffection. On separation, they dispose us to sorrow and regret: On the apprehension of inconstancy, they excite jealousy or solicitude: And the certainty of disaffection begets despondency. These three situations shall direct the order and arrangement of the following discourse.

I. Cymbeline, instigated against his daughter, by the insinuations of her malicious step-dame, and incensed against Posthumus Leonatus, who was secretly married to Imogen, baniſhes him from his court and kingdom. The lovers are overwhelmed

whelmed with ſorrow: And the princeſs, informed by Piſanio of the particular circumſtances of her huſband's departure, expreſſes herſelf in the following manner:

I would have broke mine eye-ſtrings; crack'd 'em, but
To look upon him; till the diminution
Of ſpace had pointed him ſharp as my needle:
Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from
The ſmallneſs of a gnat to air; and then
Have turn'd mine eye, and wept *.

Theſe lines expreſs the reluctance of the heart to part with the object of its affections,

* There is a paſſage very ſimilar to this in Ovid's ſtory of Ceyx and Halcyone.

Suſtulit illa
Humentes oculos, ſtantemque in puppe recurva,
Concuſſaque manu dantem ſibi ſigna, maritum
Prima videt; redditque notas: Ubi terra receſſit
Longius, atque oculi nequeunt cognoſcere vultus,
Dum licet, inſequitur fugientem lumine pinum.
Haec quoque, ut haud poterat, ſpatio ſubmota, videri;
Vela tamen ſpectat ſummo fluitantia malo:
Ut nec vela videt, vacuum petit anxia lectum;
Seque toro ponit. Renovat lectuſque locuſque
Halcyones lacrymas.

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tions, and the efforts of paſſion ſtruggling with diſappointment: That the ſentiments they convey are natural and agreeable to the conduct of the paſſions, may very eaſily be illuſtrated.

Some portion of the complacency and delight we receive from the preſence of thoſe we love and admire, is annexed to their idea, or to our thoughts concerning them when they are abſent. The idea of Leonatus would be, of all others, the moſt agreeable to Imogen; and the ſecret wiſhes and deſires of her heart would for ever recall him to her remembrance. But ideas of memory and imagination, though they may be exceedingly lively, though they entertain the mind with various and unuſual images, and are capable of cheriſhing and inflaming the moſt vehement paſſions, yield little enjoyment, compared with actual ſenſation. The conviction of preſent exiſtence diſtinguiſhes, in an eminent manner, the ideas received from objects

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jects ſtriking immediately on our ſenſes, from the operations of memory, and the illuſions of fancy. Fancy may dazzle and amuſe: But reflection, and the conſciouſneſs of our preſent ſituation are forever intruding; and the viſion vaniſhes at their approach. In the preſent inſtance, however, the figure of Leonatus can hardly be diſtinguiſhed: And the ſenſation received by Imogen is imperfect, and conſequently painful. This leads us to a ſecond obſervation. A thought never fluctuates in the mind ſolitary and independent, but is connected with an aſſemblage, formed of thoughts depending upon one another. In every group or aſſemblage, ſome ideas are pre-eminent, and ſome ſubordinate. The principal figure makes the ſtrongeſt impreſſion; and the reſt are only attended to, on account of their relation to the leading image. The mention of ſun-riſing, not only excites the idea of a luminous body aſcending the eaſtern ſky, but ſuggeſts



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the images of party-coloured clouds, meadows ſpangled with dew, and miſts hovering on the mountains. Writers, whoſe works are addreſſed to the imagination, ſtudying to imitate the various appearances of nature, and, at the ſame time, ſenſible that a compleat enumeration of every circumſtance and quality of an object would be no leſs tireſome than impoſſible, are diligent in ſelecting the leading and capital ideas, upon which the greateſt number of other images are dependent. Diſcernment, in the choice of circumſtances, and ſkill in their arrangement, are, according to Longinus, the principles of true deſcription. Now, we obſerved above, that the reality of an object enhances the pleaſure of the perception; and therefore that the perceptions we receive by the ſenſes are preferred to repreſentations merely fancied. But ſuppoſe we receive a ſingle perception from an object exceedingly intereſting; this ſingle, and even

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even imperfect perception, makes a lively impreſſion, and becomes the leading idea of an aſſemblage. Though all the ſubordinate and adventitious images are the mere coinage of fancy; yet, on account of their intimate union with the primary idea, they operate on the mind, as if their architype really exiſted. They receive the ſtamp of reality from the primary perception upon which they depend; they are deemed legitimate, and are preferred to the mere illuſions of fancy. In this manner, the diſtant, and even imperfect view of Leonatus ſuggeſts a train of ideas more agreeable than thoſe of memory and imagination: And it is not till this tranſient conſolation is removed, that Imogen would have "turned her eye and wept."

The propriety of the following ſentiments depends on the ſame principles with the former: For the belief that Leonatus, at certain fixed periods, was employed in diſcharging the tender offices of affection,



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would give the ideal the authority of actual perception, and its concomitant images would be cherished with romantic fondness,

> I did not take my leave of him, but had
> Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him,
> How I would think of him at certain hours,
> Such thoughts, and such;—or have charg'd him,
> At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,
> To encounter me with orisons, for then
> I am in heaven for him.

But why, says the critic, consume time and attention on actions so frivolous and unimportant? Can they disclose to us any of the arcana of nature? Can they reveal any of her hidden mysteries? Can they explain the wonderful mechanism of the understanding? Or discover the labyrinths of the heart?

To attend to familiar and common objects is not unworthy even of a philosopher. By observing the accidental fall of an apple, Newton explained the motions of the celestial bodies: And a principle illustrated

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luſtrated by the eaſy experiment of bringing two drops of water within their ſphere of attraction, accounts for the progreſs of vegetation. The aſſociation, we have now endeavoured to explain, accounts for many ſtrange appearances in the hiſtory and manners of mankind. It explains that amazing attachment to reliques, which forms an eſſential part of many modern religions, which fills the convents of Europe with more fragments of the croſs than would cover mount Lebanon, and with more tears of the bleſſed virgin than would water the Holy Land. Theſe objects confirm particular facts to the zealous votaries, and realize a train of ideas favourable to the ardour of their enthuſiaſm. It is not merely the handkerchief ſtained with the blood of Jeſus, that moves, ſhakes, and convulſes the pale and penſive nun, who at her midnight oriſons, bathes it with her tears: Her emotions are occaſioned by the idea of particular ſufferings



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enforced on her imagination, by the view of that melancholy object. From the ſame aſſociation we may deduce the paſſion for pilgrimage, the rage of cruſades, and all the conſequences of that fatal diſtemper. Moved by a propenſity depending on the ſame principles, men of ingenuity, enamoured of the Muſes, traverſe the regions they frequented, explore every hill, and ſeek their footſteps in every valley. The groves of Mantua, and the caſcades of Anio, are not lovelier than other groves and caſcades; yet we view them with peculiar rapture. We tread as on conſecrated ground, we regard thoſe objects with veneration which yielded ideas to the minds of Virgil and Horace; and we ſeem to enjoy a certain ineffable intercourſe with thoſe elegant and enlightened ſpirits.

Trivial, therefore, as the ſentiments and expreſſions of Imogen may appear, by attending to the principles upon which they depend, they open the mind to the contemplation

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templation of extenſive objects. Conſidering them in regard to character, they exhibit to us uncommon affection, ſenſibility, and mildneſs of diſpoſition. They are not embittered with invective: She complains of the ſeverity of Cymbeline; but does not accuſe: She expreſſes ſorrow; but not reſentment: And ſhe reflects on the unjuſtice of the Queen as the cauſe of her ſufferings, rather than the object of her anger. Exceedingly injured, and exceedingly afflicted, ſhe neglects the injury, and dwells on the diſtreſs.

Ere I could
Give him that parting kiſs, which I had ſet
Betwixt two charming words; comes in my father;
And, like the tyrannous breathing of the North,
Shakes all our buds from growing.
A father cruel, and a ſtep-dame falſe;
A fooliſh ſuitor to a wedded lady,
That hath her huſband baniſh'd;—O that huſband!
My ſupreme crown of grief! and thoſe repeated
Vexations of it.
Moſt miſerable
Is the deſire that's glorious,



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II. We proceed, in the ſecond place, to conſider the ſtate of Imogen's mind labouring with doubts, and pained with the apprehenſion of a change in the affections of Poſthumus.

Nothing, in the ſtructure of the human mind, appears more inexplicable than the ſeeming inconſiſtency of paſſion. Averſe from believing the perſon we love or eſteem capable of ingratitude, we are often prone to ſuſpicion, and are alarmed with the ſlighteſt ſymptoms of diſaffection. Whoever warns you of the treachery of a profeſſing friend, or of the inconſtancy of a ſmiling miſtreſs, is treated with ſcorn or reſentment: Yet with a ſcrupulous and critical accuracy, you inveſtigate the meanings of an accidental expreſſion; you employ more ſagacity and diſcernment than might govern a nation, to weigh the importance of a nod; and a trivial overſight or inattention will caſt you into deſpair. The heart of Imogen,

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gen, attached to Leonatus by tender and ſincere affection, is yet capable of apprehenſion, and liable to ſolicitude.

Iachimo, with an intention of betraying her, ſenſible, at the ſame time, that infidelity and neglect are the only crimes unpardonable in the ſight of a lover, and well aware of the addreſs neceſſary to infuſe ſuſpicion into an ingenuous mind, diſguiſes his inhuman intention with the affectation of a violent and ſudden emotion. He ſeems rapt in admiration of Imogen, and expreſſes ſentiments of deep aſtoniſhment.

*Ia.* What! are men mad? hath nature given them eyes
To ſee this vaulted arch, and the rich crop
Of ſea and land? which can diſtinguiſh 'twixt
The fiery orbs above, and the twinn'd ſtones
Upon the number'd beech? and can we not
Partition make with ſpectacles ſo precious
'Twixt fair and foul?

*Imo.* What makes your admiration?

*Ia.* It cannot be i' th' eye; for apes and monkeys,
'Twixt two ſuch ſhe's, would chatter this way, and
Contemn

Contemn with mowes the other: nor i' the judgement;
For idiots, in this caſe of favour, would
Be wiſely definite.—
*Imo.* What, dear ſir,
Thus raps you? are you well?

We never feel any paſſion or violent emotion without a cauſe, either real or imagined. We are never conſcious of anger, but when we apprehend ourſelves injured; and never feel eſteem without the conviction of excellence in the object. Senſible, as it were by intuition, of this invariable law in the conduct of our paſſions, we never ſee others very violently agitated without a conviction of their having ſufficient cauſe, or that they are themſelves convinced of it. If we ſee a man deeply afflicted, we are perſuaded that he has ſuffered ſome dreadful calamity, or that he believes it to be ſo. Upon this principle, which operates inſtinctively, and almoſt without being obſerved, is founded that capital rule in oratorial compoſition, "That he who would affect and

"con-

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"convince his audience, ought to have "his own mind convinced and affected." Accordingly, the crafty Italian, availing himſelf of this propenſity, counterfeits admiration and aſtoniſhment: And, Imogen, deceived by the ſpecious artifice, is inclined to believe him. Moved with fearful curioſity, ſhe inquires about Leonatus; receives an anſwer well calculated to alarm her; and, of conſequence, betrays uneaſineſs.

*Imo.* Continues well my Lord his health, 'beſeech you?
*Ia.* Well, madam.
*Imo.* Is he diſpos'd to mirth? I hope he is.
*Ia.* Exceeding pleaſant; none a ſtranger there
So merry, and ſo gameſome; he is called
The Britain reveller.
*Imo.* When he was here,
He did incline to ſadneſs, and oft times
Not knowing why.

By repreſenting the ſentiments of Leonatus as unfavourable to marriage and the

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the fair ſex, he endeavours to ſtimulate her diſquietude.

*Ia.* The jolly Briton cries,
Can my ſides hold, to think, that man, who knows
By hiſtory, report, or his own proof,
What woman is, yea, what ſhe cannot chuſe
But muſt be,
Will his free hours languiſh for aſſured bondage?
*Imo.* Will my Lord ſay ſo?
*Ia.* Ay, madam, with his eyes in flood with laughter.
But heaven knows,
Some men are much to blame.
*Imo.* Not he, I hope.

This expreſſion of hope is an evident ſymptom of her anxiety. If we are certain of any future good, we are confident and expect: We only hope when the event is doubtful.

Iachimo practiſes every art; and, by expreſſing pity for her condition, he makes farther progreſs in her good opinion. Pity ſuppoſes calamity; and the imagination of Imogen, thus irritated and alarmed, conceives no other cauſe of compaſſion than

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than the infidelity of Leonatus. The myſterious conduct of Iachimo heightens her uneaſineſs; for the nature and extent of her misfortune not being preciſely aſcertained, her apprehenſions render it exceſſive. The reluctance he diſcovers, and his ſeeming unwillingneſs to accuſe her huſband, are evidences of his being attached to him, and give his ſurmiſes credit. Imogen, thus agitated and afflicted, is in no condition to deliberate coolly; and, as her anxiety grows vehement, ſhe becomes credulous and unwary. Her ſenſe of propriety, however, and the delicacy of her affections, preſerve their influence, and ſhe conceals her impatience by indirect inquiries.

*Ia.* Whilſt I am bound to wonder, I am bound
To pity too.

*Imo.* What do you pity, ſir?

*Ia.* Two creatures, heartily.

*Imo.* Am I one, ſir?
You look on me; what wreck diſcern you in me
Deſerves your pity?



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*Ia.* Lamentable! what!
To hide me from the radiant ſun, and ſolace
I' the dungeon by a ſnuff!
*Imo.* I pray you, ſir,
Deliver with more openneſs your anſwers
To my demands. Why do you pity me?

Iachimo's abrupt and impaſſioned demeanour, his undoubted friendſhip for Leonatus, the apparent intereſt he takes in the concerns of Imogen, and his reluctance to unfold the nature of her misfortune, adding impatience to her anxiety, and ſo augmenting the violence of her emotions, deſtroy every doubt of his ſincerity, and diſpoſe her implicitly to believe him. He, accordingly, proceeds with boldneſs, and, under the appearance of ſorrow and indignation, hazards a more direct impeachment. To have bewailed her unhappy fate, and to have accuſed Leonatus in terms of bitterneſs and reproach, would have ſuited the injuries ſhe had received, and the violence of diſappointed paſſion. But Shakeſpeare, ſuperior to all mankind

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mankind in the invention of characters, hath faſhioned the temper of Imogen with lineaments no leſs peculiar than lovely. Sentiments amiably refined, and a ſenſe of propriety uncommonly exquiſite, ſuppreſs the utterance of her ſorrow, and reſtrain her reſentment. Knowing that ſuſpicion is allyed to weakneſs, and unwilling to aſperſe the fame of her huſband, ſhe replies with a ſpirit of meekneſs and reſignation.

My Lord, I fear,
Has forgot Britain.

Formerly ſhe expreſſed hope, when the emotion ſhe felt was fear: here ſhe expreſſes fear, though fully ſatisfied of her misfortune.

There is a certain ſtate of mind full of ſorrow, when the approach of evil is manifeſt and unavoidable. Our reaſon is then darkened, and the ſoul ſinking under the apprehenſion of miſery, ſuffers



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direful eclipſe, and trembles, as at the diſſolution of nature. Unable to endure the painful impreſſion, we almoſt wiſh for annihilation, and incapable of averting the threatened danger, we endeavour, though abſurdly, to be ignorant of its approach. "Let me hear no more," cries the Princeſs, convinced of her misfortune, and overwhelmed with anguiſh.

Iachimo, confident of ſucceſs, and, perſuaded that the wrongs of Imogen would naturally excite reſentment, ſuggeſts the idea of revenge. Skilful to infuſe ſuſpicion, he knew not the purity of refined affection. Imogen, ſhocked and aſtoniſhed at his infamous offer, is immediately prejudiced againſt his evidence: Her mind recovers vigour by the renovated hope of her huſband's conſtancy, and by indignation againſt the inſidious informer: And ſhe vents her diſpleaſure with ſudden and unexpected vehemence.

*Imo.*

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*Ims.* What ho, Piſanio!—
*Ia.* Let me my ſervice tender on your lips.
*Imo.* Away! I do condemn mine ears, that have
So long attended thee.

This immediate tranſition from a dejected and deſponding tone of mind, to a vigorous and animated exertion, effectuated by the infuſion of hope and juſt indignation, is very natural and ſtriking.

The inquietude of Imogen, ſoftened by affection, and governed by a ſenſe of propriety, exhibits a pattern of the moſt amiable and exemplary meekneſs. The emotions ſhe diſcovers belong to ſollicitude rather than to jealouſy. The features of ſollicitude are ſorrowful and tender: Jealouſy is fierce, wrathful, and vindictive. Sollicitude is the object of compaſſion mixed with affection; jealouſy excites compaſſion, combined with terror.

III. The ſame meekneſs and tender dejection that engage our ſympathy in



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the intereſts of Imogen, and render even her ſuſpicions amiable, preſerve their character and influence, when ſhe ſuffers actual calamity. Leonatus, deceived by the calumnies of Iachimo, ſuffers the pangs of a jealous emotion, and, in the heat of his reſentment, commiſſions Piſanio to take away her life. But the ſagacious attendant, convinced of the malignity of the accuſation, diſobeys his maſter; and, actuated by compaſſion, reveals his inhuman purpoſe. The ſtroke that inflicts the deepeſt wound on a virtuous and ingenuous nature, is the accuſation of guilt. Thoſe who are incapable of criminal acts and intentions, inſtigated by a ſtronger abhorrence of a guilty conduct than others leſs virtuous than themſelves, imagine, if, by any unhappy miſchance, they are falſely and maliciouſly accuſed, that they are the objects of ſtrong abhorrence. Of minds very eaſily affected, and ſuſceptible of every feeling, perſecuted by malice, or



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overwhelmed with infamy and the reproach of mankind, which they feel more severely than those who have less integrity, and, consequently, a worse opinion of others than they have, are exposed, for a time, to all the torment of conscious turpitude. The blush of guilty confusion often inflames the complexion of innocence, and disorders her lovely features. To be rescued from undeserved affliction, Imogen flies for relief to the review of her former conduct; and, surprized at the accusation, and indignant of the charge, she triumphs in conscious virtue.

False to his bed! what is to be false?
To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep charge nature
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myself awake? That's false to his bed?

Yet resentment is so natural in cases of heinous injury, that it arises even in minds of the mildest temper. It arises, however, without any excessive or unseemly agita-



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tion: Its duration is exceedingly tranſient. It is governed in its utterance by the memory of former friendſhip: And, if the blame can be transferred to any inſidious or ſly ſeducer who may have prompted the evil we complain of, we wreck upon them the violence of our diſpleaſure.

I falſe! thy conſcience witneſs, Iachimo—
Thou didſt accuſe him of incontinency:
Thou then look'dſt like a villain: Now, methinks,
Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy §,
Whoſe mother was her painting, hath betray'd him.

The reſentment of Imogen is of ſhort continuance: It is a ſudden ſolitary flaſh, extinguiſhed inſtantly in her ſorrow.

Poor I am ſtale, a garment out of faſhion.

It is not the malice of a crafty ſtep-dame that moves the heart of Imogen to complain; nor the wrath of her incenſed and deluded parent; nor that ſhe, bred up in ſoftneſs,

§ The word *painting* in this paſſage is a ſubſtantive noun, ſynonimous to portrait.

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ſoftneſs, and little accuſtomed to ſuffer hardſhips and ſorrow, ſhould wander amid ſolitary rocks and deſarts, expoſed to perils, famine, and death: It is, that ſhe is forſaken, betrayed, and perſecuted by him, on whoſe conſtancy ſhe relied for protection, and to whoſe tenderneſs ſhe entruſted her repoſe. Of other evils ſhe is not inſenſible; but this is the "ſupreme crown "of her grief." Cruelty and ingratitude are abhorred by the ſpectator, and reſented by the ſufferer. But, when the temper of the perſon injured is peculiarly gentle, and the author of the injury the object of confirmed affection, the mind, after the firſt emotion, is more apt to languiſh in deſpondency than continue inflamed with reſentment. The ſenſe of misfortune, rather than the ſenſe of injury, rules the diſpoſition of Imogen, and, inſtead of venting invective, ſhe laments the miſery of her condition.



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Poor I am ſtale, a garment out of faſhion;
And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,
I muſt be ript.—To pieces with me!

If a crime is committed by a perſon with whom we are unconnected, or who has no pretenſions to pre-eminent virtue, we feel indignation againſt the individual; but form no concluſions againſt the ſpecies. The caſe is different, if we are connected with him by any tender affection, and regard him as of ſuperior merit. Love and friendſhip, according to the immutable conduct of every paſſion, lead us to magnify, in our imaginations, the diſtinguiſhed qualities of thoſe we love. The reſt of mankind are ranked in a lower order, and are valued no otherwiſe than as they reſemble this illuſtrious model. But, perceiving depravity where we expected perfection, mortified and diſappointed, that appearances of rectitude, believed by us moſt ſincere and unchangeable, were merely ſpecious and exterior, we become ſuſpicious

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ſuſpicious of every pretenſion to merit, and regard the reſt of mankind, of whoſe integrity we have had leſs poſitive evidence, with cautious and unkind reſerve.

True honeſt men being heard, like falſe Æneas,
Were, in his time, thought falſe: And Sinon's weeping
Did ſcandal many a holy tear; took pity
From moſt true wretchedneſs. So thou, Poſthumus,
Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men:
Goodly, and gallant, ſhall be falſe and perjur'd,
From thy great fail.

Imogen, conſcious of her innocence, convinced of Leonatus's perfidy, and overwhelmed with ſorrow, becomes careleſs of life, and offers herſelf a willing ſacrifice to her huſband's cruelty.

Be thou honeſt:
Do thou thy maſter's bidding: When thou ſeeſt him,
A little witneſs my obedience. Look!
I draw the ſword myſelf: take it, and hit
The innocent manſion of my love, my heart:
Pr'ythee, diſpatch:
The lamb intreats the butcher. Where's thy knife?
Thou

Thou art too ſlow to do thy maſter's bidding,
When I deſire it too.

I ſhall conclude theſe obſervations, by explaining more particularly, how the repulſe of a ruling and habituated paſſion could diſpoſe Imogen to deſpondency, and render her careleſs of life: In other words, what is the origin of deſpair; or, by what lamentable perverſion thoſe, who are ſuſceptible of the pleaſures of life, and in ſituations capable of enjoying them, become diſſatisfied, and riſe from the feaſt prematurely.

Happineſs depends upon the gratification of our deſires and paſſions. The happineſs of Titus aroſe from the indulgence of a beneficent temper: Epaminondas reaped enjoyment from the love of his country. The love of fame was the ſource of Caeſar's felicity: And the gratification of grovelling appetites gave delight to Vitellius. It has alſo been obſerved, that ſome one paſſion generally aſſumes a pre-

eminence

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eminence in the mind, and not only predominates over other appetites and desires; but contends with reason, and is often victorious. In proportion as one passion gains strength, the rest languish and are enfeebled. They are seldom exercised; their gratifications yield transient pleasure; they become of slight importance, are dispirited, and decay. Thus our happiness is attached to one ruling and ardent passion. But our reasonings, concerning future events, are weak and short-sighted. We form schemes of felicity that can never be realized, and cherish affections that can never be gratified. If, therefore, the disappointed passion has been long encouraged, if the gay visions of hope and imagination have long administered to its violence, if it is confirmed by habit in the temper and constitution, if it has superseded the operations of other active principles, and so enervated their strength, its disappointment will be embittered; and



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ſorrow, prevented by no other paſſion, will prey, unabating, on the deſolate abandoned ſpirit. We may alſo obſerve, that none are more liable to afflictions of this ſort, than thoſe to whom nature hath given extreme ſenſibility. Alive to every impreſſion, their feelings are exquiſite: They are eager in every purſuit: Their imaginations are vigorous, and well adapted to fire them. They live, for a time, in a ſtate of anarchy, expoſed to the inroads of every paſſion; and, though poſſeſſed of ſingular abilities, their conduct will be capricious. Glowing with the warmeſt affections, open, generous, and candid; yet, prone to inconſtancy, they are incapable of laſting friendſhip. At length, by force of repeated indulgence, ſome one paſſion becomes habitual, occupies the heart, ſeizes the underſtanding, and, impatient of reſiſtance or controul, weakens or extirpates every oppoſing principle: Diſappointment enſues: No paſſion remains

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mains to adminiſter comfort: And the original ſenſibility which promoted this diſpoſition, will render the mind more ſuſceptible of anguiſh, and yield it a prey to deſpondency. We ought, therefore, to beware of limiting our felicity to the gratification of any individual paſſion. Nature, ever wiſe and provident, hath endowed us with capacities for various pleaſures, and hath opened to us many fountains of happineſs: 'Let no tyrannous paſſion, 'let no rigid doctrine deter thee; drink 'of the ſtreams, be moderate, and be 'grateful.'

FINIS.

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